

PlayStation® Official Magazine - Australia **NOVEMBER ISSUE 2009**

STOP PRESS!

100% Australian Content

1000 cars! Damage! Out this year?!

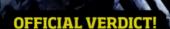


ANDS-ON!

WE GO DEEP AND HARD WITH THE ACTION EVENT OF 2009!

REVIEWED!

How the world's best sports game just got better!



Looting and shooting our way through the greatest adventure game ever!



NEED FOR SPEED!

Resurrection or retread?





PRINT POST APPROVED PP255003/06871

PS3 SLIM: SMALLER SIZE, SMALLER PRICE!

GAME OF THE YEAR EDITION



















"....Fallout 3 is the ultimate video game."

With Fallout 3: Game of the Year Edition, experience the most acclaimed game of 2008 like never before. Create a character of your choosing and descend into an awe-inspiring, postapocalyptic world where every minute is a fight for survival. Fallout 3: Game of the Year Edition includes all five of the Fallout3 Game Add-on Packs:

Operation: Anchorage - Enter a military simulation and fight in the liberation of Anchorage, Alaska from its Chinese Communist invaders.

The Pitt - Travel to the post-apocalyptic remains of Pittsburgh and become embroiled in a conflict between slaves and their Raider masters.

Broken Steel - Increase your level cap to 30, and finish the fight against the Enclave remnants alongside Liberty Prime.

Point Lookout - Embark on a mysterious and open-ended adventure in a huge, murky swampland along the coast of Maryland.

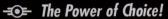
Mothership Zeta - Defy hostile alien abductors and fight your way off of the alien mothership, orbiting miles above the Capital Wasteland.





Strong Violence, Coarse Language

Falloutil 3. Operation Anchorage and Falloutil 3. The Thir 6.7009 Betheads Softworks LLC, a Zendhar Media company Betheads Softworks, Betheads Carne Studies, Zendhar and related logs are resistence trademarks or trademarks of the Studies, Zendhar and related logs are trademarks of respistence thandemarks of Betheads Softworks LLC in the U.S. and/or other countries. All rights reserved. Microsoft, Windows, the Windows Vista Start button, Xbox, Xbox 350, Xbox LWC, and the Xbox logs are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies, and "Gennes for Windows" and the Windows Vista Start button logs are used under locarse from Microsoft. 32°, "PLAYSTAILDIN", "PS-2" and "#", are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc." Other product and company names referenced herein may be trademarks or their respective owners. All Rights Reserved.



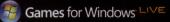
Are you good or evil? Talk out your problems or just flash your Plasma Rifle.

Rain death and destruction in an all-new cinematic combat presentation.

-⊙- Limitless Freedom! Visit towns, battle through DC, or explore the Wasteland in 1st or 3rd person.









XBOX 360









FRONT

GRAN TURISMO 5

A swag of new info about the king looks like for yourself! Page 58

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PlayStation 2

I think real war is 99 per cent uncomfortable boredom, **and one per** cent terror

MICHAEL BOON, LEAD ARTIST, MODERN WARFARE 2

INTERVIEW + HANDS-ON

The biggest shooter ever exposed



PS3 SLIM: SMALLER SIZE, SMALLER PRICE!

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An MMO FPS? Interesting...





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11 x A PSP AND DISSIDIA: FINAL DYNASTY PACKS!

5 x I LOVE YOU, MAN & STAR TREK + V8 SUPERCARS PASSES!

3x NEED FOR SPEED SHIFT DRIVE-A-RACING-CAR EXPERIENCES!



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WELCOME!

recently got berated online by someone ragging on the amount of Trophies I have. Specifically, the amount of Trophies Capt_Flashheart has. Which is not many.

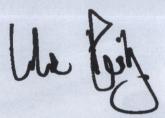
This person had a point, because when it comes to Trophies my cupboard is pretty bare. There's a pretty good explanation for this, just like there's a pretty good explanation I can't accept all of the friend requests you lot send my way (you can't all fit, so I hope you don't

think I'm ignoring you). The reason is I play almost all of my games at work, on one of the handful of machines we have around the office. My Trophies, therefore, generally vanish as fast as I earn them. I mostly just play *Rock Band* at home, because my wife can join in and I'm a caring and sharing guy.

Either way, it was the first time somebody had pointed it out, and I felt a bit inadequate.

But even so, I think this is a good thing. This means Trophies really are doing their job. These Trophies are designed to be desirable – little electronic certificates of all-around awesomeness that you want plenty of. They're designed to make you play you games harder and more often. They're designed to appeal to our competitive natures, even if it's just against the CPU.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I've got some games to replay. If my wife's okay with that.



LUKE REILLY EDITOR

PSN: Capt_Flashheart PLAYING: UNCHARTED 2: AMONG THIEVES WANTING: GRAN TURISMO 5

OPS ON: LOST TREASURE



STEPHANIE GOH

What about some kind of diamond as big as my head? Surely one of those exists. Maybe El Dorado then. I could use all that gold to buy a small country.

PSN: TBA
Playing: Uncharted 2:
Among Thieves
Wanting: Borderlands



PAUL TAYLOR

I love finding \$20 notes in old pants that have been kicked under my bed since 2007. Surely this is how archaeologists feel when they find vases and junk?

PSN: paulgusta
Playing: Need For Speed
SHIFT

Wanting: Tekken 6



JAMES COTTEE

I got burgled once, and lost my precious copy of Bushido Blade. So more than anything, I want that robber's head. On a silver platter.

PSN: DrWho3987 Playing: Monster Hunter Freedom Unite Wanting: Borderlands



JAMES ELLIS

I wouldn't mind getting my hands on the Holy Grail. If movies haven't lied to me I'll be able to use it to keep Sean Connery alive. Hopefully it could get him to act again.

PSN: gtfaster49 Playing: FIFA 10 Wanting: Gran Turismo 5

PlayStation of Official Magazine - Australia

EDITORIAL & DESIGN

EDITOR:
Luke Reilly
luke@derwenthoward.com.au
DEPUTY EDITOR:
Paul Taylor

CONTRIBUTORS:

James Ellis, James Cottee, Anthony O'Connor, Toby McCasker, Dylan Burns, Amy Flower, David Kozicki, Wyatt Hunts, Chris Stead, Andy Astruc ART DIRECTOR: Stephanie Goh CREATIVE DIRECTOR: Paul Cook

PUBLISHING & CIRCULATION

MANAGING DIRECTOR: Nick Cutler CIRCULATION ENQUIRIES: (02) 8305 6900 PRODUCTION MANAGER: Graham Hood

ADVERTISING & MARKETING

GROUP SALES MANAGER: Alex Brereton alex@derwenthoward.com.au (02) 8305 6909 MARKETING MANAGER: Vanessa Morgan

HOW TO CONTACT US:

TEL: (02) 8305 6900
FAX: (02) 8305 6999
EMAIL: ops@derwenthoward.com.au
Official PlayStation Magazine
P.O. Box 1037
Bondi Junction NSW 1355

WANT TO SUBSCRIBE?: 136 116 (NZ RESIDENTS +61 2 9282 8000) Fax (02) 9267 4363 www.magshop.com.au

MANAGEMENT

DIRECTORS:
Jim Flynn
FINANCE DIRECTOR:
Sandy Barnes
MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTANT:
Stuart Harle

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SHOUT OUTS: KJR:: Vinnie, happy first birthday!:: Nicole:: Mark Serrels:: Elissa @ www.edesign101.com.au:: Rebecca:: Snez:: Cam:: Zac

SIDER



12TOP TEN
We bust apart
the best bang-forbuck explosions

Gaming's latest and greatest

PS3SLIM, OUTNOM

Thinner, cheaper model

fter much speculation, including anecdotal accounts from retail stores across the country and leaked images from a factory showing off the new design, the PS3 'slim' is here. And it's damned cheap, too, for what's in the box.

Renamed and re-branded from PLAYSTATION 3 to just PS3, the console sells for \$499 - \$200 less than the last time you were at the shops - and packs in a 120GB harddrive. It's also more svelte than its three year-old bigger brother in its new matte case - bye-bye finger prints all over the glossy shell. That PS3 logo should be easier to spot on ads ,etc, so bye-bye Spidey font, too.

For your hard earned, the PS3 has two USB ports, and enough storage space to match the competition, plus a DualShock 3, along with all the functionality of the 80GB model bar Linux support. (Didn't install Linux on your machine? Us either.) The original's touch-sensitive power and eject controls are now proper 'clicking' buttons, and those 'upgrading' from the older model will notice a change in their electricity bill as the slim uses 34 per cent less power.

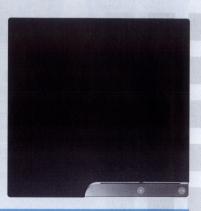
This is, in our eyes, a smart move (and at the time of print, PS3 sales are up over 1000 per cent in some territories). From now until the end of the year, and spiking again in March, there are going to be a tonne of awesome games coming out. In fact, check out the release schedule a few pages over to see the number of reasons you've bought this generation's greatest console.

OLD VS. NEW

How does your PlayStation compare? You can see here how much more petite the new PS3 is compared to the old PlayStation 3. It'll take up less space, use less power, and remain fingerprint clean. What's not to like?









14 WHERE TO NOW?

Comedy shooter

Time Splitters gets



16 AROUND THE WORLD IN PS3
The events that



18aNGRY SACKBOY What's causing a beef this month? Honestly, it could be anything.

3D GAMES IN YOUR LOUNGE ROOM, ON YOUR PS3



ony is set to release televisions in 2010 that will be able play your PS3 games in 3D, as well as Blu-ray movies. The bad news is that along with upgrading your TV screen you'll also need to wear ridiculous glasses for the effect to work. VAIO machines are also going to be given the 3D treatment.

Although this upgrade only officially applies to upcoming games, Sony is investigating whether a

patch can be applied to retroactively enable the effect on old games as well. *Avatar* is the first title to be confirmed to implement the technology, although a working version of *Wipeout HD* was recently demoed at the IFA trade show in Berlin,

The process works by splitting the television's 200Hz signal in to two separate 100Hz burts – one for each eve.

WHAT'S HOT OR NOT

Too hot to handle? Or too cold to hold?



Uncharted 2 cinema support Machinima, anyone?

Logitech Driving Force GT

Even plugging it in is a joy.
Kind of



Tokyo
We're going,
again, for the
games and

GASPANIC

GASPANIC

Music festival season

Soon, so soon. We'll see you there probably



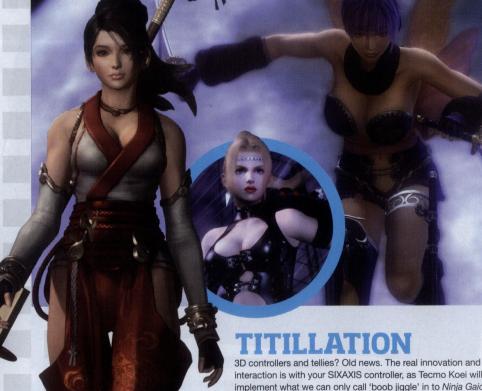
Hot, possibly 'cause of the smog. We're

going, also.

Dead rockers Yeah, we're pretty certain Kurt would've said no thanks.



Internet filtering plan Just ditch it, please, Gov'munt. Not impressed.



3D controllers and tellies? Old news. The real innovation and interaction is with your SIXAXIS controller, as Tecmo Koei will implement what we can only call 'boob jiggle' in to Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2 by shaking your controller. Wiggle the pad and the chest furniture of playable characters Momiji, Rachel or Ayane will bounce accordingly as you play. Feminists rejoice.

IN SHORT...



DJ AM, a contributing artist on upcoming Activision title *DJ Hero*, was found dead in his apartment on August 28, due to an alleged accidental overdose. His work will still appear in game.



The IEAA has renamed itself to be the Interactive Games and Entertainment Association to more clearly reflect what they do. IGEA are the association in charge of lobbying for changes to games classifications.



Though it's only confirmed for the US at this stage, re-vamped versions of PS2 classics *God of War* and *God of War II* will be released in the *God of War Collection* for PS3. *Collection* will run the two titles at 720p and 60 fps.

Screentest and more



THIS SHOW MUST GO ON

New trade fair debuts to spectacular success

he premiere of gamescom in Cologne, Germany, has been a huge success. With 245,000 punters passing through the turnstiles, gamescom has instantly become the world's largest games expo, easily eclipsing the usual E3 and TGS crowds.

Event organiser Koelnmesse and its conceptual sponsor, the German Association of Interactive Entertainment Software (Bundesverband Interaktive Unterhaltungssoftware, or BIU) were very pleased with the result.

'We are very proud of the premiere of gamescom. It fulfilled all our objectives right away and is the largest game trade fair in the world. Computer and video games are so attractive that our industry is breaking all records despite the economic crisis." said Olaf Wolters, managing director of the BIU.

It appears the entire thing was pulled off with such typical German efficiency that we can now expect gamescom to become a vearly event. gamescom 2010 will take place in Cologne from August 18 to August 22.

SCREENTEST: Your favourite games as movies

METAL GEAR SOLID

Courage is solid

The Director

Quentin Tarantino

The Plot

Solid Snake infiltrates the self-contained spiraling madness and post-cold war paranoia that is Shadow Moses on the hunt for his biological brother Liquid Snake - a man who intends to launch a nuke in the general direction of the US government. What follows is a twisting, self-indulgent splooge-fest of monologues, severed limbs and diarrhea.

The Pitch

Apocalypse Now plus Alaska plus METAL GEAR?!

Green Light or Development Hell?

Believe. Tarantino is just about the only director/ scriptwriter that can make insanely self-indulgent dialogue seem compelling and necessary (see Inglourious Basterds for proof of this). His awesome work on Kill Bill shows us that he can pull off pants down, balls-out action. Kojima's mixture of camp,

homage, and the downright retardedly insane would probably work in the hands of his Quentin-ness.

Best Line:

"Metal... Gear?"

The Cast:

Hugh Jackman as a young, slightly horny Solid Snake

Johnny Depp as a camp, yet somehow buff Liquid Snake

Annie Wersching as a young, wannabe bad arse Mervl

Zombie Richard Crenna as the Colonel (let's just exhume him!)

Gary Oldman

as a messed up. scarred Psycho Mantis

66 Metal... Gear?

SOLID SNAKE







The millions of US dollars that Take Two just settled with its investors over the 'Hot Coffee' content in GTA: SA



SEPARATED AT BIRTH

PlayStation

NO. 9 African cop / Chris Redfield's pack horse Sheva -

Sure, their skin tone is out by a few shades, but their facial structure means these two could be siblings in a Jacksonesque world (minus the plastic nose). Plus, we'd like to see Anne Hathaway to pick up a Beretta and wear a head-piece

Available 23.10.2009

Preorder at SEAMES 1011
and receive a downloadable Gearbox mercenary gun pack!
"Limited time only. While stocks last. Valid only on PLAYSTATION 3 and XBOX 360.

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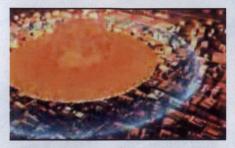




Top 10

TOP 10 MEMORABLE EXPLOSIONS

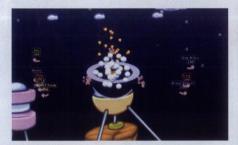
From a car's spark plug to the devastation caused by the atomic bomb, explosions are everywhere, everyday. These are burned in to our consciousness. Boom time.



NUCLEAR MISSILE

RESIDENT EVIL 3

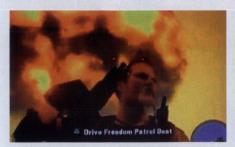
Ever wondered why subsequent games never took place in Raccoon City? We'd say it's something to do with the Feds, who got word the virus had spread to an unstoppable level, and so decided to hose the city down with a nuclear missile. Cue mushroom cloud.



HOLY HAND GRENADE

WORMS

It looks fairly inauspicious, save for that un-aerodynamic cross on the top, but when the angelic 'hallelujah!' cries out, expect to see invertebrates violently and rapidly cast asunder. The holy hand grenade flies with divine intervention and determination.



NUCLEAR MISSILE

MERCENARIES 2: WORLD IN FLAMES

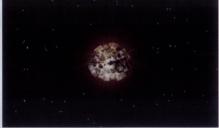
Pick out what to level with that military-grade laser, and say bye-bye, or "laser guided airstrike incoming on your target". Stand back, and hold your breath between the bomb reaching ground level and the resulting mushroom cloud. Cool guys don't look at explosions.



NUCLEAR MISSILE

CALL OF DUTY 4: MODERN WARFARE

After fighting off opposing forces that are closing in on your downed pilot's position and hauling her in to the evac chopper, mad bastard Khaled Al-Asad detonates a nuke. A hasty exit, even as the good quys, can't outpace a nuclear wind.



SMOKE

MORTAL KOMBAT III

After Smoke's beaten the snot out of you, his definitive fatality is to drop a shocking and awesome load of bombs from his chest cavity. As the clank of metal-on-concrete stops, the camera pulls back – way back – and the entire world blows up. Overkill much?



FIREWORKS

COLIN MCRAE DIRT

Fireworks going off are awesome. Piloting a car along mountain tracks is awesome. Put these two moments together, however, and the glory of taming a 300-odd horsepower brute is sullied by a mood-breaking eruption of cringe-worthy flares at the finish line.



DYNAMITE

FAR CRY 2

Be warned, spoiler ahead. After deceiving, being deceived and finally, finally catching up with the Jackal, he provides a worthwhile conundrum, and you can't die another day. Just try to keep the sound of your own heart breaking lower than the erupting rock face.



A ROCKET

HALF-LIFE 2 EPISODE 2

Klaxons are wailing while striders are pounding the base. Lob your sticky bomb askew of the monsters and they toast the compound. Sure, the explosion's huge, but what's memorable, and maddening, is the smug git Magnusson was right to doubt you.



ATOMIC BOMB

FALLOUT :

After you're done speaking to the townsfolk, Mr. Burke's solicitation to level the town of Megaton for pleasure means you'll not only have to rig the bomb that acts as the town centerpiece, but then press the detonator. If the guilt doesn't kill you the fallout might.



DYNAMITE

GTA: VICE CITY

Avery Carrington adds complexity to building detonation: drop charges in it using a remote control helicopter. Watching any structure come down is impressive, but the lead up, goons shooting at your 'copter and that damn time limit make it worthwhile.

REED FOR SPEED D

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PLAYSTATION 3









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Where to now?

THE STORY A rift in the fabric of convirient

A rift in the fabric of copyright law has thrown the music world into chaos! This time distortion is allowing rap artists to sample music from the tuture as well as the past, making royalty payments more complex than the GST

and ETS combined. The solution: bullets. A square-jawed space marine is on the case.

STORY

A cosmic methane build-up has turned the world's crappers into slightly stinky time portals! As a square-jawed space marine, you must warp between the water closets of past, present, and future, hunting the mastermind behind this diabolical poo plot!

EXPLAIN YOURSELF

Music games are always popular, but fashions are fickle.

Hate runneth over, and what better

outlet than a murder simulator

that lets you shoot wafer-thin

parodies of disgraced showbiz

personalities right in the freaking face.

EXPLAINYOURSELF

From time immemorial, lavatories have been synonymous with deception and mystery. Why is there no paper? Can this 'Jenny' really offer a good time? What is it about cheap scotch that makes that one office worker's poop smell so bad? All these secrets – and more! – will be revealed...

HOW WILLIT PLAY?

Imagine a cosmic nexus linking every dunny in all of time and space. Roman Vorhitoriums, Japanese water jets, zero-G space station poopers... around each new corner lurks new horrors. And how will you tell the TimeShitters from the civvies? They're the ones who don't wash their hands!



HOW WILL IT PLAY?

Guarding every B-list boss will be a horde of enablers, handlers, groupies, agents, managers, roadles carnies, and other assorted parasites Bonus stages will let you strap electrodes to morally defective radio hosts and shock them until their eyeballs melt.

PROBABILITY

Low. Celebrities draw their power from the faith of normal citizens. Believing talent equal to virtue, punters turn a blind eye to every deviant sin their god-kings can concoct. Team Arrenda was a hit, though, so who knows?

PROBABILITY

Tollet humour is the universal language. This shooter would squire no plot, no dialogue, and all likelihood a very limited set ftextures. And don't forget: the Germans own Free Radical now. Those Krauts sure like their scheize.

WHIERETONOW?

Still stinging from the disgrace of *Haze*, Free Radical has now been annexed by the Crytek Reich. But what fate awaits their flagship franchise? Is *TimeSplitters* to be pumped full of Zyklon B? Or could the funniest FPS around somehow flourish under dour German rule?

THESTORY

Crime is everywhere!
Drugs! Burglary! Murder! Human
Trafficking! Piracy! Car Rebirthing!
The import and sale of medical
equipment lacking proper accreditation!
Rape! Counterfeit jeans! Contraband
cigarettes! And more! As a squarejawed space marine on a miserable
salary, your mission is to get a
piece of the action.

EXPLAINYOURSELF

Imagination and a thirst for excellence have evaporated from the minds of the young. Tell a child that the Earth could fit inside Jupiter's red spot, and he'll yawn. Tell him he can make two grand a week selling crystal meth, and he'll perk right up. CrimeSplitters will be fine-tuned to the dominant impulse of the age: nihilistic greed.

THE STORY

Alcopops are turning our nation's youth into crazed killers! As a square-jawed space marine, your mission is to enforce neo-puritan wowserism through the barrel of a gun.

HOW WILL IT PLAY?

Sinners are everywhere! That up student on his fifth beer. That child ripping into a packet of fat-laden crisps. That trendy urbanite sucking on the butt of a fag. There's an easy way to tell who you need to shoot – they're the ones who look like they're enjoying themselves.

PROBABILITY

Well, it would sell its pants off, obviously. The real question is whether any Classification Board on Earth would allow it to go on sale. Perhaps Crytek could invest in 'Crime Offsets' to appease the biggest gangsters of the lot:

HOW WILL IT PLAY?

CHARLES PUTTIERS

Extorting money out of people under the threat of menaces sounds so vulgar – which is exactly why it will be the dominant play mechanic. Press the barrel to the jowls or temple of a petty crim, and watch him cringe accordingly. If necessary, they could license the facial expression tech from Heavy Rain.

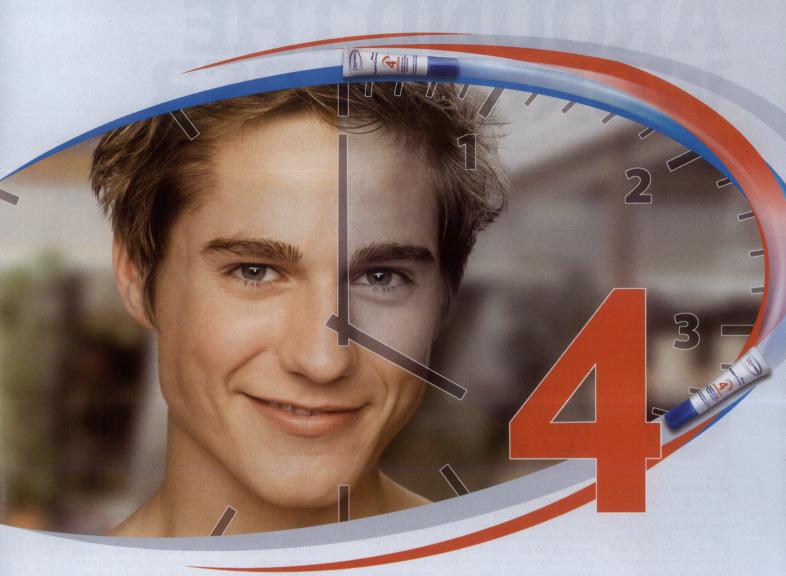
EXPLAINYOURSELF

Have you noticed how pious things have got lately? Movies don't have gratuitous tit shots any more. It's illegal to smoke almost everywhere and every week there's a new report declaring something or other is a Serious Health Threat. But why complain about this trend, when you can make money off it?

PROBA-BILITY

Higher than you think. There's always a developer out there willing to make a stand above some issue or other. Recall Frontlines, which made a case for Peak Oil Theory.

Clearasil



Gives you visibly clearer skin in just 4 hours.

Clearasil. Clear Skin Confidence.

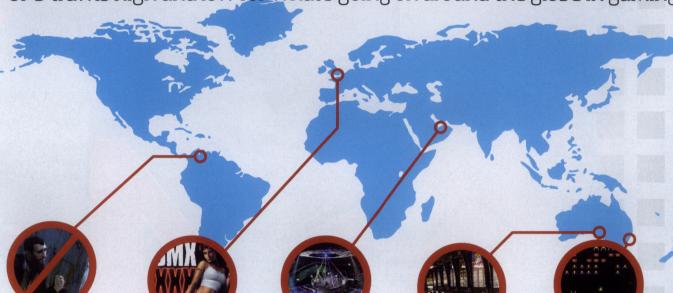
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Around the world in PS3

AROUND THE WORLD IN PS3

OPS trawls high and low for what's going on around the globe in gaming



CARACAS, VENEZUELA **BYE BYE TO BANG BANG**

Venezuelan politicians are looking to ban violent videogames and toys in the country in a bid to reduce the amount of violent crime that takes place. In late August, the bill made it past the National Assembly and must pass a second vote and also be signed by President Hugo Chavez. Opponents of the President claim that 100.000 people have been murdered in the time he has been in power.

LONDON, UK CLASSIFIED: FIASCO

Hey kids! Here's one way to get hold of GTA IV, Manhunt and all those other violent games you just can't buy: get 'em in the UK. The UK equivalent of the OFLC rating system, PEGI, never actually passed in to law in 1984. British Home Office officials didn't pass on the existence of the 1984 Video Recordings Act to the European Commission: the PEGI has no legal force.

DUBAI, UAE FOR THE AGES

Nearly a year-and-a-half after its initial announcement, SEGA's theme park has opened in Dubai Mall. Featuring nine rides, Sega Republic also features a selection of arcade and prize-redemption games. The rides themselves are standard theme-park fare, but cleverly disguised with Sonic motifs. We hope it's more fun than Sonic Unleashed

ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA GAMERS AT RISK OF GAMBLING

Researchers from the University of Adelaide have found that teenagers who play video games on a regular basis are statistically more likely to become addicted to gambling. After surveying 2669 teenagers between the ages of 13 and 17, 56 per cent had gambled in the last 12 months and 2.4 per cent were already pathological gamblers.

BRAIDWOOD, AUSTRALIA SHOOT 'EM UP, AND UP...

This is perseverance. Phil Day set a new record on the 1981 shmup Galaga, scoring 3.44 million points, trumping the previous high score of 2.7 million. Day set the record after practicing for six months, though his victory came in the early hours of August 29, after playing for two hours and five minutes.

There was no-one else around... I was pretty exhausted," said Day.

ERNATIONAL CHA



Fight Night Round 4 Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10 Call of Juarez: Bound in Blood Ubisoft Killzone 2 Sony Codemasters Wolfenstein



Katamari Damacy TributeNamco Bandai Shin Sangoku Musou 5 Empires Koei Renkinjutsushi Gust BlazBlue Toro to Morimori Winning Post World Koei



	Source: NPD	
	Batman: Arkham Asylum	NBP
	Madden NFL 10	EA
	NCAA Footbal 10	EA
	Wolfenstein	Activision
	UFC 2009 Undisputed	THQ
	inFamous	Sony
	Fight Night Round 4	EA
	Call of Duty World at War	Activision
	Rock Band 2	MTV
10	Red Faction: Guerrilla	THQ

RELEASE SCHEDULE

Coming soon to a store near you...

OCTOBER 2009



OF: Dragon Rising GENRE: SHOOTER
DISTRIBUTOR: NAMCO
BANDAI PARTNERS



DJ Hero GENRE: MUSIC DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION



FIFA 10 GENRE: SPORT DISTRIBUTOR: EA



Borderlands



Uncharted 2: Among Thieves GENRE: ADVENTURE DISTRIBUTOR: SONY



NBA 2K 10 NRE: SPORT STRIBUTOR: 2K



Alpha Protocol ENRE: RPG ISTRIBUTOR: SEGA



Brütal Legend



WWE Smackdown Vs Raw 2010



GENRE: FIGHTING
DISTRIBUTOR: NAMCO
BANDAI PARTNERS



Ratchet & Clank: A Crack in Time ENRE: ADVENTURE



Ninia Gaiden Sigma 2 ENRE: ACTION
ISTRIBUTOR: THO



Fallout 3 GOTY GENRE: ADVENTURE DISTRIBUTOR: NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS



EyePet GENRE: ADVENTURE DISTRIBUTOR: SCE

NOVEMBER 2009

Assassin's Creed II

GENRE: ACTION DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT

Modern Warfare 2

GENRE: SHOOTER
DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION

Dragon Age: Origins

GENRE: RPG DISTRIBUTOR: EA

The Saboteur GENRE: ACTION DISTRIBUTOR: EA

Planet 51

GENRE: ADVENTURE DISTRIBUTOR: SEGA

LEGO Indiana

Jones 2
GENRE: ADVENTURE
DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION

LEGO Rock Band

GENRE: MUSIC
DISTRIBUTOR: WARNER
BROTHERS INTERACTIVE

GENRE: RACING DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION



Mafia II GENRE: ACTION DISTRIBUTOR: 2K



Red Dead Redemption GENRE: ACTION
DISTRIBUTOR: ROCKSTAR



Heavy Rain GENRE: ADVENTURE
DISTRIBUTOR: SONY



Guitar Hero: Van Halen GENRE: MUSIC DISTRIBUTOR: ACTVISION





Aliens Vs. Predator GENRE: SHOOTER DISTRIBUTOR: SEGA



Bayonetta GENRE: ACTION DISTRIBUTOR: SEGA



Dark Void GENRE: ADVENTURE
DISTRIBUTOR: THQ



Final Fantasy XIII ENRE: RPG ISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT



Gran Turismo 5 GENRE: RACING DISTRIBUTOR: SONY



Just Cause 2 GENRE: ACTIONRE DISTRIBUTOR: NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS



God of War III GENRE: ACTION DISTRIBUTOR: SONY





R.U.S.E. GENRE: RTS DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT



GENRE: ACTION DISTRIBUTOR: ROCKSTAR



Darksiders GENRE: ADVENTURE DISTRIBUTOR: THQ



Crysis 2 GENRE: SHOOTER
DISTRIBUTOR: EA



Dante's Inferno GENRE: ACTION DISTRIBUTOR: EA



Tony Hawk: Ride GENRE: SPORT DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION



Battlefield: Bad Company 2



BioShock 2 GENRE: SHOOTER DISTRIBUTOR: 2K

PSPRELEASES

Gran Turismo OCTOBER 2009 GENRI DISTRIBUTOR: SONY E: RACING

GTA: Chinatown Wars OCTOBER 2009 GENRE: ADVENTURE DISTRIBUTOR: ROCKSTAR

Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines NOVEMBER 2009 GENRE: ADVENTURE DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT

Star Wars Battlefront NOVEMBER 2009 GENRE: ADVENTURE DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION

DECEMBER 2009 GENRE: FIGHTING
DISTRIBUTOR: NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS

AUSTRALIAN CHARTS

Source: GfK



Ashes Cricket 2009



Wolfenstein



Sacred 2: Fallen Angel



Madden NFL 10



Fight Night Round 4



Guitar Hero Metallica



Grand Theft Auto IV



inFamous



Guitar Hero World Tour



Prototype



DECEMBER 2009



GENRE: ADVENTURE
DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT







OUOTE UNOUOTE Industry chatter, inside tips and loose lips



quintessentially generic be enough to deflect all curiosity" The NY Times reports on Harmonix's **Rock Band Network** codename: 'Nickelback'



broken system" Tom Crago, president of the Game Developers Association of Australia, gives his opinion of the lack of a R18+ classification.



"Our analysis indicates by customers" Capcom president Haruhiro Tsujimoto on the (lack of) success enjoyed by Bionic Commando.



lan Livingstone admits confusion when hearing that Rocksteady, the team behind Batman: AA, would develop Hitman 5.



FROM J.J. ABRAMS, ALEX KURTZMAN & ROBERTO ORCI

"A paranoid thriller... the best new series to emerge..."

- Tom Gliatto, PEOPLE







If you like...



...you'll love
The Mentalist: The Complete First Season
AVAILABLE NOW ON DVD





Fantasy

Fantasy



OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION
ANDY ASTRUC

CHARACTE AREJACKASS

ideo games give us the chance to exit reality, enter a fantastical world full of elves or robots, and slide into the shoes of a complete stranger who is better than you. Increasingly, however, they offer the chance to control the actions of a huge jerk on his or her adventures to suck obnoxiously hard. Main characters lately have evolved beyond

fun, happy and cool, skipped through hardcore, and settled nicely into being

They used to be the guys you wished you were; now they're the guys you wish would die in a fire.

The only thing better than well-written dialogue is dirty hair and leather !! Action games are one of the guiltiest genres here. Apparently you can't be properly motivated to shoot a bunch of bad dudes unless you have more testosterone than a thousand angry bulls and the social skills of a pre-teen boy who has been eating paint chips. People might remember Army of Two, the game which cast you as two homicidal maniacs that give each other high fives to celebrate mass murder. I'm pretty sure I wanted the terrorists to win. The sequel is on the horizon, which I imagine will feature a co-op chest-bump move that causes cot-death.

Assassin's Creed also has a sequel looming, also confuses 'character development' with is a repellent cockroach'. In 1191AD play Altaïr, an assassin by trade, but otal schmuck for no charge. He gets a rd for not just being a jackass, but also ignorant. Stripped of his rank at the start of the game for officially being the worst secret killer in history, he spends the rest of the story being a jerk by killing people because a jerk of an old man told him to. Meanwhile, in the future, his ancestor is stuck in a small room for the whole game, and so is restricted to just being a whicing idiot.

This terrible trend isn't so new, of course.

Lara Croft has been a hideous shrew of a woman

for decades. Nothing makes me identify with a character more than animal slaughter, theft, murder, more animal slaughter, and them being filthy-stinking rich. I'd like to play the game where you're Lara's butler, using stealth and guile to reach a telephone so you can call the police to have that crazy, stuck-up bitch arrested.

But a character doesn't have to start as a complete twat, sometimes it happens through focus groups and market analysis. In The Sands of Time, the Prince of Persia was an arrogant pill, but he was at least likeable, and went through a slow-but-steady arc of improvement. Then for the next game someone decided that the only thing better than well-written dialogue is dirty hair and leather. Yelling at slutty women and not shaving is also pretty awesome.

We are somehow expected to care about these eople, too. *Bionic Commando* gave us some guy n't remember his name because his defining that his arm was a robot - looking for his er after she vanished some time ago. him with the motivation to help the at abandoned him. Heart-wrenching that he also finds it hilarious and erotic n bodies get crushed under forklifts.

getting anyone? Oh yeah, every main character from every RPG that ever has been or will be made.

The only people qualified to lead a group of ragtag adventurers on a quest to save the world are teenagers: introverted, emotional black holes who listen to sad-rock and cut themselves or excitable self-centered morons that can't stop talking long enough to put on a whole shirt. In a different reality Final Fantasy XII was about Balthier: a cocky pirate who flies around the world with his 80-year-old bondage rabbit solving mysteries and being chased by his mad-scientist father, who won't stop pulling a magical chain gun out of his pants. In this reality we get to play as Vaan, who is as important and interesting as dead grass.

Originally, Basch - the gruff and tough captain of the guard - was slated to be the main character, but the people with the money didn't think consumers would buy a game about someone who has a personality and is over the age of consent.

We have to stop this before it's too late. Otherwise we'll all be playing Big Annoying Ass-Face 5, in which the final mission requires you to punch yourself in the face and break down crying

Andy Astruc is a New Zealand-based freelance writer and is the main character in his own life. He knows everything is terrible except video games.

LAST YEAR WE SCORED OVER





ORD THE DEMO 10.9.09

















SHOULD WE PAY,



11 The PSN wasn't just conjured out of thin air by the Tim Tam genie ""

he PlayStation Network all the functionality of that out your wallet. It makes you wonder though, if we're not paying to run it,

You see, the PSN wasn't just conjured out of thin air by the Tim Tam keeping it ticking along and evolving in order to continually facilitate wicked times for gamers across the globe. moderators, customer service... the list goes on. All this isn't free, so is Sony

putting a lot of cash into the PSN. It is a core feature offered by the PS3 and But what you may not realise is that the developers and publishers also foot the between the Xbox and PlayStation. charges the developers and publishers

16 cents per 1GB downloaded, which all

wallpaper, arcade game or DLC, every time a PlayStation user downloads is charged. Now we know what you're thinking: better them than us, right? Maybe. But maybe not.

major issue for publishers, especially as the install base of the PS3 grows. The PS3 Slim and a Christmas packed with essential games like Uncharted 2 will certainly see to that. There have already been exclusive DLC defections to Xbox example) we don't want too many more. burden of releasing something on the

come to start looking into charging for the PSN? Ultimately it needs to be answered by us, the PlayStation users. The service was offered free of take a yearly hit from our own wallets to ensure that we've got a far more realistic chance of getting access to all the DLC

we won't charge you.

Chris Stead is an industry veteran and









NEW FEATURES INCLUDE...

- FIGHT AGAINST NUMEROUS ENEMIES ACROSS 17 STAGES AND VARIOUS ENVIRONMENTS
- ENGAGE IN INTENSE 2-PLAYER ONLINE CO-OP ACTION IN MORE THAN 30 CHALLENGES
- THREE ALL NEW PLAYABLE FEMALE CHARACTERS, EACH WITH BRAND NEW WEAPONS AND ABILITIES
- COMBINE MELEE AND PROJECTILE ATTACKS TO ELIMINATE YOUR ENEMIES
- SAVE & REVIEW YOUR MOVES AND SHARE YOUR CINEMA & MISSION RESULTS OVER THE PLAYSTATION*NETWORK
- DOWNLOADABLE CONTENT
- REFINED GAMEPLAY, MAKING FOR A MORE ACCESSIBLE, REWARDING GAMING EXPERIENCE













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COMPETITIONS

WIN! WIN! WIN!

FEED YOUR FANTASY

Thanks to Ubisoft we've got a great swag of *Dissidia: Final Fantasy* prize packs to give away. The grand prize includes a limited edition *Dissidia* PSP bundle, plus a special Collector's Edition of the game itself and a Trading Arts action figure. 10 runners up will receive a standard version of *Dissidia*, plus a lithograph and post card set. You'd be mad as a meataxe to pass up this chance! To enter just answer the question below and follow the entry instructions on page 25.

Question: Who is your favourite Final Fantasy character and why?





ILOVE YOU, MAN & STAR TREK PRIZE PACKS! STAR TREK 1-10 PI FIVE TICKETS TO THE V8 SUPERCAR GRAND FINALE!

RESTRICTED

Sexual references and coarse language

Say I love you man with a prize pack that's out of this world! Thanks to Paramount Pictures we've got a killer haul that'll please any red-blooded Aussie bloke. The grand prize includes a copy of the sci-fi blockbuster Star Trek on DVD, as well as the comedy smash I Love You, Man on DVD - but that's not all. The grand prize winner will also take away the first 10 Star Trek films on DVD plus five tickets to the V8 Supercars Grand Finale in Homebush, Sydney. Prove how much you love your mates by bringing four of them along on a pre-race grid walk on the Sunday morning! Four runners-up will receive Star Trek, I Love You, Man and the original 10 Star Trek movies on DVD. For a chance to win simply answer the following question and follow the entry details below.

Question: Other than handing out free trips to the V8s, what's the best way to display a bit of bromance?

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To enter Official PlayStation Magazine competitions email your entries to ops@derwenthoward.com.au with the name of the competition ONLY in the subject line. Email entries are entitled to one entry (multiple entries will be deleted!). Alternatively, send clearly marked postal entries to OPS competitions PO BOX 1037, Bondi Junction 1355. Please include your name, age and address with your answer on the back of an envelope. Chance plays no part in determining winners. Competitions close 28/10/2009. Winners will be notified by mail.



WIN!
3 x
DAY ON THE
TRACK IN A V8
RACE CAR
WORTH
\$475!

NEED FOR SPEED SHIFT

HIFT offers an unparalleled true drivers experience on PS3, and this is your chance to experience what it feels like to be a racecar driver, as OPS in conjunction with EA want to give three talented readers a day in a race-bred V8!

You'll be given instructions by a professional racecar driver and then handed the keys to a race spec V8 and let loose on the track. They'll also take you for a spin 'round the circiut and shows you how it's really done!

To be in the running we want you to pick any car you like in

SHIFT and, using the in-game livery tools, design it to fit in to one of these three categories:

Category 1: Ultimate

Make your own full-blown race car. Upgrade your machine with a body kit, stick on a team name, a number, and at least three different in-game sponsors making a design you'd be proud to race.

Category 2: Show Pony

This can be as sweet or ridiculous a ride as you like. Go mad; make it a head-turner for all the right or wrong reasons.

Category 3: Trash Bag

Where it all goes wrong. It might seem sacrilege, but we want to see faux rust and scratches, paint jobs that look like someone's spilled thinner on your motor's glossy exterior, a beaten-up wreck that needs that needs to be written off.

We want to see original and outrageous designs, so get you imagination flowing to nab this awesome prize!

The winner of each category gets a day out on the track!

HOW TO ENTER:

For this, you'll need a copy of Need For Speed SHIFT, a PSN ID and a Facebook account. Once you have your winning design entry complete, take your car out on any track you wish and get a good, clear snapshot of it using the in-game replay. Upload that to EA Nation.

Jump on to EA Nation and email your image to us at the usual address: ops@derwenthoward.com.au with SHIFT comp as the subject line. Don't forget to let us know your name, state and age!

Your car must have the phrases 'OPS' and 'EA' clearly visible on the bodywork, no matter what category you want to enter, and you must also have read and accepted the full terms and conditions on our Facebook page: www.tinyurl.com/OPSAus. Add yourself as a fan, and click on the 'discussions' tab. We're giving you plenty of time to get in and design your winning motor as entries close 11.59 pm Tuesday November 10.

You must also be aged 18 or over and able to drive a manual vehicle to claim your prize. Track days are only available in NSW, VIC, SA and WA according to availability. If you are under the age of 18, you will be eligible for three hot laps as a passenger only and must have the consent of your parent or guardian.

So load up SHIFT, pick a car, pick a category and get designing!





BOX

Speak to us!

LETTER OF THE MONTH!

TRUE LOVE

I've been a long-time reader and gamer, but this is my first write. Just finished reading September 2009 issue that made a welcome appearance in my letterbox, and thought to myself I must put pen to paper for my favourite spread.

I'm a 34-year-old male that has been a gamer since the 2600 and the Game & Watches. I've had every console ever released (although not the Wii, doesn't interest me) and I have to say that no other console has ever had me drooling like the PS3 has. Yes, I have had a 360 and thought it was the ant's pants until it red ringed on me. In disgust, I traded in the so-called "Elite" and spilled out the extra cash on a PS3. I have never been happier

in my 28 years of gaming as what I am now. Gaming on the console of gods and watching Blu-ray on a 1080p TV still blows me away, even after having had the console for a good 18 months. I don't want to sound like a fanboy, but the PS3 leaves the other current gen consoles for dead. I recently upgraded (thanks to your article on how to do it) my HDD to a whopping 500GB and couldn't be more stoked. Which gets me to my point. I suffer, like a lot of other people in this country, with depression. My PS3 has become my helping hand. I met and fell in love with my current girlfriend, who has become my soulmate, thanks to PlayStation Home. What are the chances of meeting someone with the same disability and interests as me after playing 10pin bowling and chess on Home? When we are not with each other, we are battling each other online or chatting with our PS3 headsets.

We are in love and it's just another reason why I love my PS3.

Thank you Sony. Love the magazine. Mark Mansell, via email

Wow, you met your girlfriend on Home? That's actually quite impressive, particularly considering we still assume a larger-than-desirable proportion of the 'girls' in Home, um... pee standing up in real-life. Well done though, that's excellent to hear. Has your PlayStation brought you any unexpected extra joy, or linked you with a new or old loved one somehow? Write in and let us know. We're all big softies, really.

SPEAK TO US

Love the mag? Hate the mag? We want your opinions and questions on *OPS*, on games – on *anything* that you feel the need to share with your fellow readers. The best letter of each issue wins the Game of the Month! Write to us on paper or on a computer at:

OPS Feedback
Derwent Howard
PO Box 1037
Bondi Junction, NSW 1355
ops@derwenthoward.com.au

and also on Facebook tinyurl.com/OPSAus



WILL WORK FOR GAMES

McArlein, I'm 18 years old and I live in Warrnambool, Victoria. I'm a passionate reader of your magazine; I have been for a long time. You guys do fantastic work and I want to thank you for your magazine's each month, they inspire me to keep gaming harder and harder. I am e-mailing today to ask whether you have any jobs available at the

ev guys. My name is Luke

passionate about gaming.

I would love to hear back from you guys, as I really love what you do.

moment. I would love to play games and review them for you, as I'm very

Luke McArlein, via email

Thanks for the praise Luke. We actually get requests like this quite regularly, but unfortunately we can't have everybody on board. There wouldn't be enough work to go around! There are certainly opportunities that pop up, but for now it's a little like musical chairs around here – although nobody is standing up when the music starts again. Don't give up though!



BACKWARDS COMING FORWARDS

ey OPS crew. I have been a reading for nearly two years now and I've decided to write you guys an email since I saw that October's issue will be released on my birthday! I guess I know what my birthday present to myself will be.

On to my main topic, since hearing that the new PS3 Slim will be out in early September it was also mentioned that Sony won't return the feature that many fans wanted; backward compatibility of PS2 games. In my opinion, I think it is one of Sony's downfalls of the sales of the PS3.

One of the reasons why reckon is that PS2 owners do not want to upgrade because they want to play both libraries of PS2 and 3 games on one console. Also, new gamers would like the opportunity to play old school PS2 classics that they really want to play (and never got to play before) on their PS3 without buying another console. I don't think Sony understands the concept that is being brought up by so many people, and if they do, I hope they have a really good excuse as to why they are letting them down.

In the end though, I'm pretty glad I was an early bird and collected myself the 60GB model. I just think that it will be cool if Sony releases PS2 games on the PlayStation Store and get them to work, hopefully tables could turn from then on.

PS: What do you think of the new PS3 logo? Personally, I like the Spider-Man font instead.

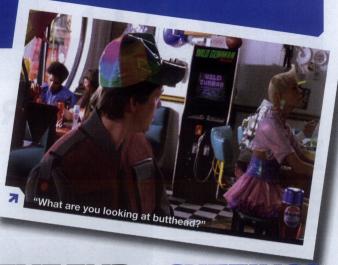
Aaron Keomanikhoth, via email

We see this debate quite often, and it's not our job to discount it, but we often wonder just how big of a deal backward compatibility is. The ability to still play PS2 remains important to a lot of us here at OPS, so we just kept our PS2s. We find it pretty hard to believe many PS2 owners would be against buying a PS3 because

they can't play PS2 games on it. The simple solution is keep your PS2. It's smaller than a cat, so it can't be that hard to keep around. Loads of

> people have cats. We have a cat and a PS2 His name is Chairman Meow. The cat, not the PS2. Anyway, we

like the new logo. The Spider-Man one is long and thin, this one is short and chunky. It stands out better in



THE END

ev guvs. Love the mag: vou guys are doing an incredible job. Getting to business. I wanted to ask you guys a question: will console gaming come to an end? It might sound a little ludicrous, but it's been going around in my head for a while now. In just a decade, look how far with come. When Tomb Raider first came out, it was praised for its pretty 3D graphics. Now we have MGS4, with possibly the best graphics seen in a game today. If we were to go any further, we would end up with virtual reality (what else is there?), and if everyone embraced that, where will that leave consoles? Just like past consoles, would the PS3 be shelved in the future also? I sure hope it won't, but is it possible? Thanks guys.

Davud Altuntas, via email

If Back to the Future has taught us anything it's that, come 2015, any game that requires you to use your hands will be like a baby's toy. Using that logic, consoles have another six years until they're all relegated to nurseries and playpens around the world. The Wii has a head start; it's already there. Realistically speaking, consoles will be around for as long as people want to play games, and people will always want to play games. How you play them may change, but they're not going anywhere.

CUTTINGS

FROM THE HEART

I know you get a lot of mail about you being the best PlayStation magazine but I wanted to add my heartfelt thanks for writing such a great magazine, it is a great thing to look forward to every month. Matthew Atkinson, via email

Thanks man, we appreciate the support. It's not always easy creating a 100% local magazine every month, but we're glad you enjoy it. Keep that in mind if you suddenly start seeing another 'Australian' PlayStation magazine around that more or less comes straight from the UK

HITS AND PIECES

Hi, really enjoy the mag been reading it since the PSone days. The Angry Sackboy page rocks. Just wondering if there's any word on another Hitman game.

Luke Pass, via email

We're sure Angry Sackboy values your support, but he's been in such a rage lately he's been hard to approach. The last thing we heard about Hitman was that development duties had shifted to new powerhouse dev Rocksteady, the studio behind Batman: Arkham Asylum. It quickly turned out that was bunk though - Hitman is still lo Interactive's baby. That said, we think the next project on its agenda is the Kane & Lynch sequel. Hopefully the fifth Hitman won't be far behind.

GRAN SLAM

Where the f-k is Gran Turismo 5? I love my PS3 and I love the series, but I'm so tired of waiting for this game! Just bring it out already? It's been years and years since the last one! Just add cars with DLC later on!

Eddie Murphy, via email See page 56. Also, make better movies. Meet Dave sucks. Where's Beverly Hills Cop 4, huh?

TOILET HUMOUR

find myself falling asleep on the shitter as I read the majority of the letters some freaks send to you. These people should be checked by their doctors to see if they have pulses, as the crud they spew from brain to keyboard is coma-inducingly boring. Can't they ask their GPs if a personality-boosting drug is available yet, and if so to give them a triple dose? Stop printing letters that don't contain uplifting bouts of humour. Keiran Stibbard, via email

Readers, you are on notice. Be funnier or Keiran dozes off on the dunny. This appears to be our only



BOX

Speak to us!

DRIVEN TO DESPAIR

I wish you could tell us more about GT5. It's so frustrating that they're simply not telling us anything about this game. What's the big secret? If I was in charge I would've been trickling out the cars and tracks for some time now, watching the fan base get more and more into in as they piece together all the info. GT is all about the cars, but it's like they don't understand all we want to know is what cars will be in the game. Every week they could announce a few new cars to the game, accompanied by screenshots, and then every few weeks introduce a new track (or reintroduce an old one). They could do a profile on the Top Gear Test Track for instance. They haven't once mentioned that since it announced. like, two years ago. Come on Polyphony Digital, let's go!

PS: Next time you speak to Kazunori Yamauchi tell him GT5 absolutely needs a Ford Falcon GTHO Phase III and the new HSV Maloo in it. Please, please, please! Johnno, via email

We wish we could tell you more about it too. GT5 made a minor splash at

the inaugural gamescom in Cologne. but hopefully by next issue we'll have plenty more for you from the Tokyo Game Show. We couldn't agree more about your Aussie car selection though. We might even chuck in a

few of our own if we can pin him down. We don't know how good his English is however. In fact, Maloo is an Aboriginal word. That could be an even bigger issue. We'll keep you posted on that.



TEST YOUR BRAIN TO WIN A GAME! How to enter: Use the letters from the coloured squares and re-arrange them to form the name of a

ACROSS

- Star system where Killzone is set (13)
- Ghost town butcher
- Battle Engine... (6)
- 14. Web cartoonist, CIA Hero (4)
- 15. Precedes new GT
- 17. Chop-Chop Master... (5)
- 18. Chie and Yukiko are probably... (8)
- Half these Scousers are dead (10)
- 22. Coding flaw, 3D fighter (10)
- 23. Dr. Doom's Homeland (8)
- 24. Leaden invertibrate (9)

DOWN

The first was not the last (12)

- 2. New from Arc System Works (8)
- Space commies in 40K (3)
- Upgrade of Eager Cleaver (15)
- New York harbour
- disaster, 2009 (8) Owns Marvel
- Comics (6) 10. Highest Vib Ribbon
- evolution (5) 11. Master of the
- Servbots (9) 12. LBP's new element (5)
- 13. Sly Cooper: inFamous for... (7)
- 16. A shadowy vacuum (8)
- 20. Gravity Crash: a remake of... (6)
- 21. Short for 'Service Games' (4)



51' MONASAX SS' NOBLH 53' AKKUZA DOWN 1' SINIZÜ S' NENICE 6' BANWAN 8' NANEFONA 6' ELABE 10' ESCUDO 15' TEONICA 13' ALOMICA 11' SECREL 16' BFOODA Lest month's answers Across 3. WINDBACK 4, ZOMBIE 5. CONFRONTATION 7. PURGATORY 9. FRACTURE 11. STALKER 14, COP 15. CERBERUS 16. DOT 18. JUICED 20. JEANNEUN

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2. Name five of the planetary bodies you visit in PSone classic Descent



3. Identify these space shmups:







4. Lasers, in space! What game are they from?







5. In what game do you replace planets in the solar system with everyday items?

6. What 'profession' do Mace Griffin, William J. Johns and Jango Fett share?







SPACE SPECIAL!

7. What planets did these dudes either invade or defend?







8. Name the game from the screenshot. Hint: 'Space' is somewhere in the title.









9. What planet did Duke Nukem once visit?

10. Match the loading screen mini-game to its main game counterpart













. WHAT DO THESE GAMES HAVE IN COMMON?













ANSWERS 1. General Zod 2. The Moon, Venus, Mercury, Mars, an Asteroid, Io, Callisto, Europa, Titan, Hyperion, tethys, Miranda, Oberon, Meptune, Triton, Mereid, Pluto, Charon

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ISC DEFINITIVE EDIT.

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The Observer looks into the future of television - and reports back: it's looking good!

ust when you thought decent genre television was being replaced by yet more cop/doctor/lawyer shows, J.J. Abrams (Cloverfield, Lost, Star Trek), Alex Kurtzman and Robert Orci bring us Fringe.

The show is an X-Files/Twilight Zone-style program with three FBI agents from the "Fringe Division".

Agent Olivia Dunham is played by Aussie actress Anna Torv – the face, voice and motion of main character Nariko from PS3 game Heavenly Sword.

Joshua Jackson (Pacey from *Dawson's Creek*) plays Peter Bishop and another homegrown talent, John Noble (*Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King's* Denethor) is Walter Bishop, Peter's father and an eccentric, even insane, scientific genius.

These three encounter all manner of unusual cases, as actor Michael Cerveris – who plays the enigmatic Observer – told us.

Michael Cerveris: "It certainly harkens back to shows like *The X-Files*, but it takes the premise further. You have the main three exciting and intriguing personalities, plus me – the Observer – who is a bit of a mystery. We're not sure if he's good or bad, just that he always seems to be at these fringe events, observes them and reports back to someone or... something."

Is it monster-of-the-week telly or is there a bigger story involved?

MC: Certainly each week the writers have strived to create the feeling of a self-contained feature film – but there is a bigger story under the surface. A force called The Pattern is part of the bigger picture.

Are the writers going to tease it out over a whole bunch of seasons like *The X-Files* or will answers be more immediate?

MC: The truth is somewhere in between.





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Turn off the lights, make a big bowl of cereal and watch the first season all at once "

MICHAEL CERVERIS

What's great with writers of this calibre is that they have a general intuition of what's going on - but also go back and link things in genius ways the audience won't expect.

The world has changed a lot since the days of The X-Files, is that reflected in the

MC: Yes, the Fringe Division operates under the watchful eyes of Homeland Security but there's not a sense that it's the American Government covering things up. This is much bigger than that. It takes place on an international level - fringe events occur all over the world and our heroes go where they're needed. It's a planetary scope.

Tonally, is it horror, sci-fi, thriller or all of the above?

MC: We go for all three and more. One week will be really terrifying like a horror movie, another will be sci-fi and sometimes we mix it up.

Tell us more about the Obsever...

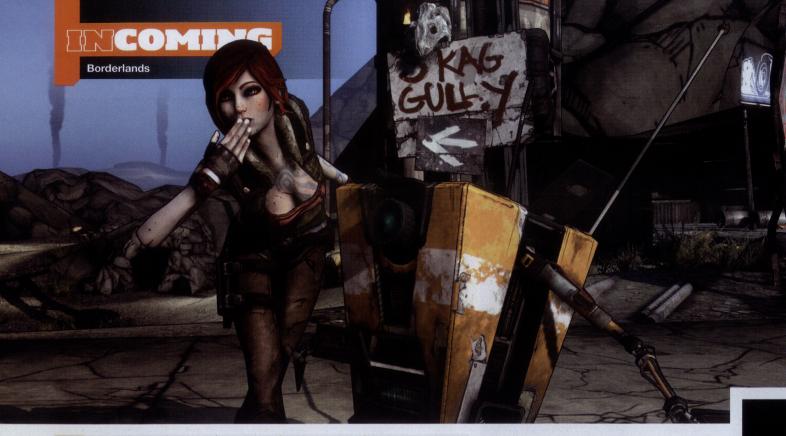
MC: Sometimes he's only seen for a fleeting second, sometimes he's there for longer. Our heroes notice him and while he's not an alien there's definitely something not quite human about him... the character is explored a lot more in the second season.

A lot of the episodes are based on "Fringe Science" and events that have taken place, yes?

MC: Yes, it starts out with a basis in the world we live in and goes from there to... well... you'll

Although it's probably going to be on telly again at some point the Blu-ray release of the complete first season is quite something, yes?

MC: It's fantastic. In fact that's the way the show should be watched. Turn off the lights, make a big bowl of cereal and watch the first season all at once.



PS3 GENRE: SHOOTER | RELEASE: OCTOBER 2009 | DISTRIBUTOR: 2K | DEVELOPER: GEARBOX SOFTWARE

BORDERLANDS

So many monsters, so many weapons - it's party time, bitches!



allout 3 was a fine game. Engaging, immersive and utterly compelling, we figured Fallout 3 would hold the RPG/action crown for some time.

We may have been wrong. That crown could soon adorn the lumpy, mutated head of *Borderlands*.

No doubt readers know about Borderlands from previous issues. Here's a quick recap for the hard of remembering: Borderlands takes place in the future. You play a character – whose class, gender, power and look you decide – who has landed on an unfriendly planet.

This hostile landscape is where you'll seek fortune and glory... and also something about a secret treasure created by an ancient alien civilisation. A treasure that will give whoever

66 Fallout 3 was an RPG with some shooter elements added on top. Borderlands is the reverse: a shooter with RPG elements added on top 33

finds it powers beyond human imagination.

Plus you'll be shooting a whole bunch of men, beasts and other things. We had the chance to play the game from the start but also much later on when the character had levelled up to 21.

First things last: playing at level 21, with three human controlled friendlies was an absolute blast.

Literally.

Adopting the persona of Lilith we found ourselves wielding an automatic sniper rifle that shot corrosive acid bullets. The team's goal was to collect 50 crystals from the inside of a cave brimming with shiny goodness... and a bunch of hostiles.

Ducking and weaving our team was set upon by a bunch of bandits. They looked like they'd just walked out of an S&M club or a Hot Topic outlet – however there was nothing EMO about their weapons.

Firefights in *Borderlands* are fast and furious affairs. There's no pause or turn-based shenanigans here. You shoot just like you would with any FPS. However, as your rounds thunk into your foe you can see how much damage you're doing as wee numbers float into the air, letting you know how much damage you're doing. Also with the acid rounds, the weapon would shoot a shell that stayed in the bandit's body, continuing to dissolve them in a grisly display of cel-shaded gore and mayhem.

Two of our four members knew each other in the "real world" (whatever that is) and were arguing about who shot the most baddies. To solve this argument they entered Duel Mode: this is activated by slapping your partner and demanding satisfaction. If said partner agrees to the duel a bubble of static energy surrounds the players who then duke it out to see who's

the king of the castle.

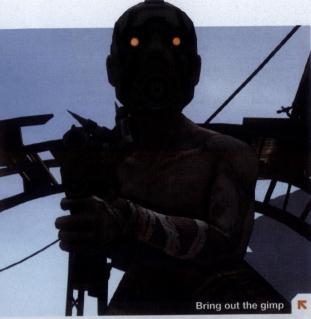
After one of them died normal play resumed. We collected the crystals and killed a bunch of giant insect-like creatures, not to mention bandits and generally unpleasant characters. It was good to see how cool the weapons were, how strong your personal shield is and how big and tough the monsters get – because we were about to start the single player campaign.

Said campaign opens on the entrance to a small town. You have no weapons, no shield and no pants (although the last one was a personal choice). A charming wee droid called Claptrap got us into town where we met the doctor.

As in most Quentin Tarantino flicks or Trainspotting, when you meet a character the screen freezes on a close up and you get their name. The Doc sends you on what basically amounts to a series of tutorial missions: kill some skags, buy a personal shield, knock off some raiders nearby – that kind of caper. After we'd managed to get a fairly pissweak weapon and a similarly shonky shield the first real mission became available: A nasty fellow by the name of Nine Toes.

His freeze frame also mentions he has three balls. We weren't quite sure what to do with that information so we just dashed into his base, guns-a-blazing.

Each character type has a few special tricks. Some can charm animals into being killing machines, others can phase through space/time and our character could chuck out a portable mounted gun that acts as backup. Nine Toes didn't like this and started sending skags (they're like feral dogs except their faces split open and they spew horrid stuff at you) to even the fight. The turret took care of them, leaving us to finish off Nine Toes.





FIVE RANDY POINTS

Randy Pitchford, president of Gearbox Software, was on hand to tell us some tantalising tidbits:

#1 - "The PS3 version actually looks better and has smoother animation than the 360 version. We're really taking advantage of the PS3's power and Blu-ray technology."

#2 - "We wanted to make a game that we'd play. So things like split-screen co-op and duel mode came about as we were playing. Sometimes it's fun to work with a friend but if they're talking smack you can settle things.

#3 - "At first you walk in the game, 10-15 hours in you'll start to use vehicles and by the 30 hour mark you can use transporters."

#4 - "Yes, I'm serious - there are literally millions of weapons. Even today I'm looking at randomly generated ones I've never seen before."

#5 - "There are about 30 big main missions (some of which are broken up into like 16 parts or more) and over 100 side missions. Altogether there's over 100 hours of gameplay."



THUNDERDOME!

Other than four-player co-op, standard multiplayer, split screen and the like, Borderlands features arenas. Like Thunderdome you'll either walk out a winner or lie dead. Two men enter, one man leave. You can even access these combat arenas during the single player game to shake things up a little.



It looked like he might have had the better of us but we learnt that critical hits are skill based, unlike say Fallout 3 where it's essentially a random dice role. If you shoot an enemy in a weak spot it's a critical hit. As well it bloody should be. Anyway, we managed to blow Nine Toes, and his plus-sized scrotum, away and walked outside feeling pretty good about ourselves... when some flying beasties attacked and ate us.

That seemed as good a time as any to stop. It was great to get a juxtaposition between the weak squib you start of as and the bad arse melon farmer you become.

Borderlands is coming very soon and we're more than a little excited. It feels like it caters for everything you want in a game: shooting, gore, monsters, upgradeable powers, millions (yes, millions) of weapons randomly generate throughout, the multiplayer options are numerous



as well as (wait for it) co-op split screen!

A AAA title that has over 100 hours of gameplay and includes split screen - this could be the next Fallout 3. Hell this could be better than Fallout 3. Profane, violent, anarchic and stylish - Borderlands is high on our already brimming wish-list. Review to come soon. **Anthony O'Connor**

- ♠ Huge environments
- ↑ Cool visuals
- Split-screen!



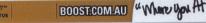




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PS3 GENRE: SPORT | RELEASE: OCTOBER 2010 | DISTRIBUTOR: NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS | DEVELOPER: KONAMI

PROEVOLUTION SOCCER 2010

We lost because we didn't win...

t has been a troubled start to this generation of gaming for the beloved *Pro Evolution Soccer* series. *PES* has failed to win any silverware next to the might of *FIFA*, with manager Seabass seemingly losing his edge. *PES*'s tactics were feeling outdated and overplayed, key players had departed for greener pastures, the stadium was starting to crumble at the edges and fans were becoming immune to yearly promises of a revitalised campaign. Does *PES 2010* invigorate its title challenge?

A game

Upon firing up PES 2010, it is clear things are going to be much cleaner and accessible. Your pre-game set-up has a host of new slide-bar adjustments that you can make to your tactical set-up, with each increment reciprocated with a graphical change of your team's on-field positioning. It's a system that allows casual afficionados to accessibly toy with their game plan, but also offers extreme levels of depth to the fanatical hooligan. You can even go as far as to define who marks up on who, allowing you to put a fast, aggressive defender on a Christian Ronaldo, for example.

This is sure to intensify the already heated

offline multiplayer experience, and the new Community section offers the full stat-tracking that this mode has screamed for. You can set up to 32 unique profiles on the hard-drive, which enables you to track just about every in-game statistic for comparison against your friends, including head-to-head – double the awesome of an Eric Cantona karate kick.

Online has also been significantly reworked. Konami has acknowledged the lacklustre network code of the previous editions and has partitioned an entire development team off the main project to focus solely on improving it. It will need to go beyond this, however, as online is a clear hole in PES's defensive line against FIFA's attack. Reintroduction of PES 6 features like lobbies, spectator modes and clan support would go a long way to achieving this, and the early signs are promising.

On the field, the most notable change to the game experience is in the intelligence of the AI – midfielders will rush back when being countered to help defenders and the front line pushes up in numbers when on the attack – and in a much weightier feel to the players. You cannot turn nearly as sharply: the new 360 degrees

of movement asks you to be more mindful of momentum and to corner in a circle rather than in right angles. It is a lot more authentic, and while it will be the main cause of frustration for series regulars for the first hour or so, you do adapt to it quickly.

"Agh, my shirt! I'm not supposed to get balls on it!"

It may not be the massive overhaul fans thought would happen when the next-generation first landed, but it most certainly looks like Seabass is finally making passes that stick, and getting his strikers good ball in the PES box for the 2010 edition.

♣ Chris Stead

WE SAY

- Big graphical improvement
- ♠ Deep tactical options
- Still missing key licenses

OPS IS...
Thinking of switching sides







- M Games

- J Music **Photos**
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playstation.com.au





Heavy Rain

PS3 GENRE: ADVENTURE | RELEASE: EARLY 2010 | DISTRIBUTOR: SONY | DE

"They come inside raindrops, making the rain chubby"

Pressing & might threaten him. Pre might try to calm him down. They might but since the text is jumping all over the place you're not 100 per cent sure. Oh, and you he

compounds the paranoia – you feel someone

What happens next? The robber might sh you in the shoulder, panic, and run off. You might

James Cottee

LIFE ON MARS?

a decade. Their arty debut title Ornikron, while featuring the in-game presence on David Bowie, suffered from hornid loading times. The unique branching story of

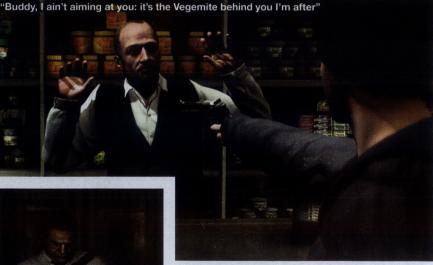


Zach Braff really let himself go...

IT'S LIKE...

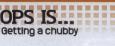


Tip: don't snooze whilst reloading



WE SAY

- Astonishing facial modeling
- Authentic paranoia
- But how long is it?



Chubby Rain



PS3 GENRE: ADVENTURE | RELEASE: 2010 | DISTRIBUTOR: NAMCO BANDAI PARTNERS | DEVELOPER: MERCURYSTEAM ENTERTAINMENT/KOJIMA PRODUCTIONS

Ground floor: creepy staircases

IT'S LIKE...



CASTLEVANIA: LORDS OF SHADOW "I have done questionable things" - Gabriel

astlevania: Lords of Shadow is the latest game in a series that has been re-imaged and is currently being forged in exciting, next-gen ways. Forget all the song and dance about the star-studded voice-acting cast that includes the likes of Patrick Stewart, Robert Carlyle and Natasha McElhone; it's the newly announced features that have us excited. Although details to date are cryptic at the least and vague at best, every new trailer and screenshot released to date has screamed epic. What we've learnt from gamescom is of a similarly grand vein.

You'll be playing as Gabriel, a man in pursuit of two holy objects – a God mask and a Devil mask. The developers are keeping tight-lipped on the specifics of these items, suffice it to say they're narrative focused more-so than gameplay influencers. Lords of Shadow won't follow an existing or known Castlevania timeline but will, instead, exist within its own part of the universe in order to attract newcomers to the franchise.

Hardcore fans need not worry about the potential holy watering down of their beloved universe though, as the developers intend on remaining faithful to the series. All of the core features still remain; with the most

recognisable being a dagger,
holy water and chain-whip
wielding protagonist
who dispatches
supernatural foes.
The story is set to
unfold for the player
through over an
hour worth of
cinematics;
with the
longest
cutscene

weighing in at over 14 minutes (Metal Gear Solid 4 fans rejoice).

Platforming has a greater emphasis this time around, with Gabriel able to scale cliffs and castles, using his chain-whip to assist him. While the left analog stick will be used to control movement, the right stick is rumoured to allow full control over the chain-whip. The other buttons will be divided between short-range attacks, ranged attacks, jumping and secondary weapons.

The camera angles are fixed, which will be interesting to see how well they handle combat with a fully directional whip. Stylised quick-time event sequences are in, although the developer is once again silent on how they will differ from the regular variety. Weapons will be upgradeable, such as Gabriel's cross which can be modified into a stake for driving into the hearts of overfriendly vampires who break into your personal space.

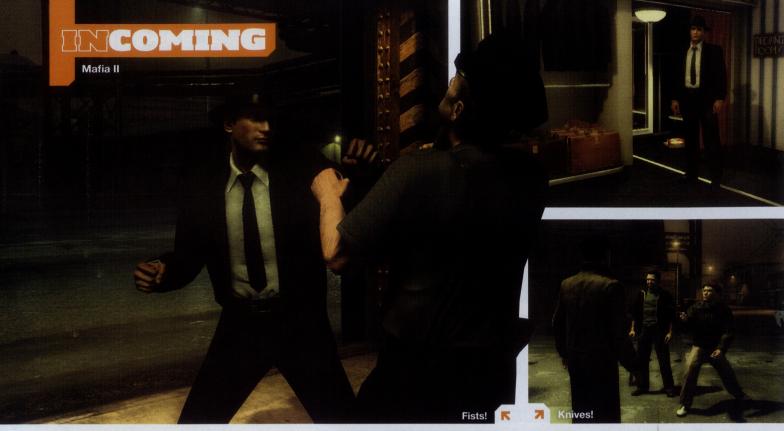
The gorgeous in-game visuals are currently running at 30 frames per second on the developer's patented Mercury Engine, with a more lush 60 fps frame rate only a secondary concern. It's 60 per cent complete thus far, which means there's still quite a few sleeps before hitting the PS3. Regardless of the wait, Castlevania: Lords of Shadow is shaping up to be a ripsnorter. J Nathan Lawrence

WE SAY

- ♠ Gorgeous visuals
- Accessible to all
- Fixed camera

OPS IS...
Inventing time travel











PS3 GENRE: ADVENTURE | RELEASE: EARLY 2010 | DISTRIBUTOR: 2K | DEVELOPER: 2K CZECH

MAFIAI

An open-world offer you can't refuse

he scope of the sequel to the acclaimed open-world action title, Mafia, is sufficiently next-gen and thus suitably epic. 2K Czech is determined to show how alive its circa-1950s world is at every opportunity. You'll be playing the role of Vito, as you make your way through an in-depth and expansive city that boasts over 100 indoor locations that can be explored. The visual attention to detail is top-notch, with a believable cityscape and near seamless loading times as you move through interior to exterior environments and vice versa.

Although Mafia II is set to include a highly scripted and essentially linear story, you'll be able to make certain choices that influence one of four possible endings. Despite the usual restrictive nature of a linear storyline, Mafia II includes little gameplay influencing touches. For example, changing clothes isn't merely an aesthetic decision as it can throw off the cops who are in pursuit of a certain man dressed in particular garb.

The game will feature 50 authentic vehicles to choose from and a garage to store your favourites. Upgrades are possible too, so throwing a supercharger into your newly swiped V8 is gonna give your car more guts. Speaking of swiped cars, you'll be able to secure a set of

wheels in a couple of different ways. You can choose to pick the lock of a parked car, but while you'll be less likely to draw attention, it will take time. If urgency is called for, then you can simply smash the window and get in a whole lot quicker, but you'll probably be noticed.

Choices aren't merely limited to the type of clothes or car you want to drive either, as decisions will be thrown at you around every corner. This extends beyond the now-standard stealth or guns-blazing approach to missions too. At one point during a recent game demonstration, Vito is accosted by a pair of knife-wielding would-be muggers. He draws a gun on them and they back down, but a nearby police officer notices the commotion and comes to investigate, demanding to see Vito's firearms licence. It's then up to the player to decide how they want to deal with the situation: produce the licence, bribe the cop, turn tail and run, or gun him down. All options have consequences.

The technology of the 1950s is on your side when it comes to police intervention, as a street cop is only able to spread your description so far. In the same breath, a high speed police pursuit is not liable to spread to the other side of the city if you can avoid or outrun the

DEVOLVING FEATURES

Where every other new open-world title likes to gloat about its quasi-realistic day and weather cycles, Mafia II is heading in the opposite direction. It may be a pretty feature in many other games, but 2K Czech has decided that its use of time of day and weather will aid in storytelling. Fans of the original game may well recall how effectively the mood was set on a certain farm level that was played out during a dark and stormy night. If scripted time of day and weather can help with storytelling, we're all for it.



chasing fuzz. Unlike other open-world titles, it's suicidal to take on a street filled with police, so avoiding cops will be a big part of staying alive.

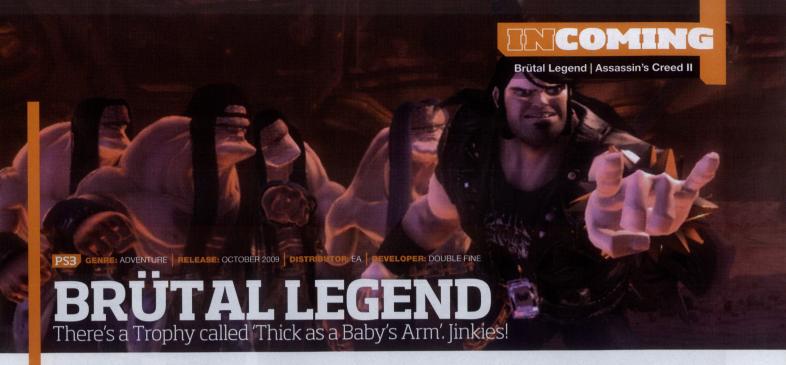
Nathan Lawrence

WE SAY

- ♠ A living, breathing cityscape
- Emphasis on player choice
- Upgradeable vehicles

OPS IS Joining the mob





ord on the street is that Tim Shafer envisioned his new game as an RTS long before the whole singleplayer-epic-starring-Jack-Black idea came together. Given the flair and polish of Brütal Legend's multi-player mode, we're inclined to believe it. The premise is deliciously simple: two supernatural bands have stages at the opposite ends of a rock festival. Their rockin' antics attract more fans - the source of their power (and unit-building) ability. Shrewd tactics and a critical mass of fan support will give you the power to storm the enemy stage, steal the show, and win.

To prevent StarCraft-esque levels of fruity over-complexity, the unit cap is quite low, and to make play fresh and immediate,

all actions are controlled through your avatar: time-traveling roadie Eddie Riggs, gothic demoness Ophelia, or the diabolical Doviculus (wielder of the dreaded quad-guitar). Each faction has radically differing units, moves, economies, and tactics - and each avatar can

Above all, the unique sense of humour that gave the world Psychonauts, Grim Fandango, and Monkey Island sets Brütal Legend apart. An example: one of the Trophies invokes the Six Degrees of Kevin Bacon effect. You can only get it if you've personally played against Tim Schafer. Or if you've played against someone who's played against Tim Shafer. Or played against someone who's played against someone... you get the idea. It's like herpes.

Except it's good, and you'll want to get it.

The same could be said for Brütal Legend itself. It's good. We want to get it. We want you to want to get it. In fact, we wish we were playing it right now... - James Cottee

- Brütal third-person action
- Rockin' multi-player
- Champagne comedy

Polishing the axe



PS3 GENRE: ADVENTURE | RELEASE: NOVEMBER 2009 | DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT | DEVELOPER: UBISOFT MONTREAL

SSASSIN'S CREED II

The best kind of Creed

great amount of effort has gone into assuring fans that Assassin's Creed III has learnt from the mistakes of its preceding title. Performing X amount of side missions will no longer be required to open up a main assassination mission, but you'll still need to clamber up ancient skyscrapers in order to get the lay of the land. Eagle eye mode is back, but it can be left on while moving about, albeit at the expense of your HUD. In fact, if you're not a fan of the HUD, you can disable it entirely.

Recently unveiled features include the ability to pickpocket unwitting NPCs for spare trinkets to spend on items and health at your local merchant shop. One of the purchasable items is poison that can be used to increase the lethality of your hidden dagger. Once poisoned, protagonist Ezio will only have to nick the neck of an unsuspecting foe to send him sprawling. If that doesn't create enough chaos for you, ill-gotten gains can be scattered on the ground to lure moneygrubbing peasants into creating a timely distraction for a quick exit stage left.

Loot can also be spent on hiring thugs to attack selected targets to take the focus away from you, and smoke bombs can be dropped to cover a hasty departure. Azio will have access to a small gun for one-shot kill opportunities, but the catch is you'll have to enter an aiming mode



WE SAY

- Stylish escape opportunities
- More weapons and items

OPS IS Flying on rooftops





EXCOMING

RAGE











PS3 GENRE: SHOOTER | RELEASE: TBA | DISTRIBUTOR: EA | DEVELOPER: ID

"Right now, I'm kinda like a powder keg, and you're the match..."

o the untrained eye, the world of RAGE bears a striking resemblance to the world of Fallout. It's set a couple of hundred years in the future, in a North America that has been scoured by apocalyptic flames. Everywhere you look, you can see nature reclaiming the works of man, with roads and buildings in unchecked decay dotting the landscape. The wastes are teeming with Mad Max-style bandits, and hideously deformed mutants - feral, ghoulish abominations of the human form, some having grown into freakish giants. And amidst this chaos two factions wage war: a rag-tag band of freedom fighters, and the tyrannical remnants of the old order who sit upon thrones of avarice in their blast shelters.

Based on that description, you could be forgiven for thinking that RAGE was a knock-off of Fallout 3. Yet key differences set this shooter apart. For one thing, it's from id, the developer that invented the first-person shooter as we know it. What's more, the new stable-mate of Wolfenstein 3D, Doom, and Quake will be a showcase for id's new graphics engine: id-Tech 5.

The bleeding-edge graphics of RAGE are

made possible by the use of MegaTextures bitmaps of up to 128,000 by 128,000 pixels. These iumbo-textures can be used to paint in complex background details, with the relevant optimised visual data streaming in only as needed. This saves stacks of memory, in turn making room for even more MegaTextures. It's also completely scalable, so in spite of any rumours you may have read online, id-Tech 5 will be able to make full use of the PS3 hardware.

Don't be surprised if that extra spunk in the trunk will also allow the level designers to inject some crucial extra razmataz. As immersive as Fallout 3 was, staring at those endlesslyrepeating background props could induce some killer headaches.

Oh yeah - there are also cars. You can't have a Mad Max future without cars. The only cars in Fallout were burnt-out roadside wrecks that exploded when you shot them. But the jalopies of RAGE will get you from A to B in a flash; so long as you can fend off the odd dune buggy attack in the process. There will also be MotorStorm-style races; rough-and-ready dirt track events where vou'll dash and smash for cash.

Another neat innovation: you don't need to go out on missions to systematically blast mutants for loot. There will be an arena mode where you can ventilate deformed humanoids in classic corridor shooter style, all for cash and prizes on some warped reality show. It's basically a super-slick remake of that underrated shooter The Club - and it's only one aspect of the RAGE experience

RAGE will be in stores 'when it's done'. That could be 2010. Or 2011. It looks like it'll be worth the wait. . James Cottee

WE SAY

Racing, exploring, shooting, looting

Jaw-dropping graphics

Smoldering



PS3 GENRE: RPG | RELEASE: TBA 2010 | DISTRIBUTOR: TBA | DEVELOPER: SQUARE ENIX

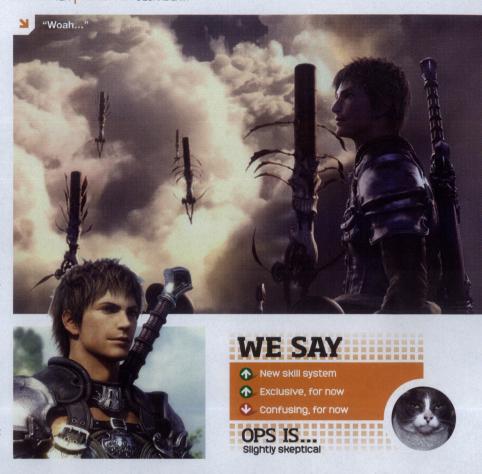
-FXII Dazed and confused

inal Fantasy XIV seems still very much in its infancy really, despite the apparent fact it remains on track for a 2010 release

An alpha build was available for hands-on on the show floor at gamescom and gave attendees 15 minutes to tool around with it. Unfortunately, and it's a common complaint, nobody was on hand to explain how anything worked. That left everyone wandering around aimlessly wondering what they were supposed to kill and how one would go about doing that.

It's tough to glean much at all then at this stage, aside from the fact FFXIV is visually very similar to FFXI - the last FF MMO. This is likely to try and entice FFXI users to delve into FFXIV instead (or as well).

FFXIV is actually abandoning two very basic MMO ingredients - experience points and levelling. Characters aren't restricted to a particular class anymore either, and are free to concentrate on anything they like. Like Capcom's Monster Hunter series, your skills are defined by your equipment. Square Enix is calling it the Armoury system. Weapons and equipment level up organically the more you use them, rather than your character. Within this system there are four basic disciplines, but there's no need to commit to any particular one & Clint McCredie







PS3 GENRE: SHOOTER | RELEASE: TBA | DISTRIBUTOR: TBA | DEVELOPER: CCP SHANGHAI

DUST 514

Ashes to ashes, funk to funky. We know Major Tom's a junkie...

pecifically, 300,000 gamers worldwide are addicted to the universe of EVE Online. EVE isn't just a massively multiplayer sci-fi cosmos where aspiring space pirates can make their fortune. It's a staggeringly complex economy, constantly shifting and evolving. Other MMOs have guilds. EVE has corporations. Getting ahead in this high frontier of finance is less about being Han Solo, and more about being Jabba the Hutt.

Soon EVE will be wrapping its tendrils around the PS3. Yet this quintessentially PC gaming experience wouldn't really work on consoles, hence the invention of DUST 514. a massively multiplayer first-person shooter. The two games will be linked, with the clone mercenaries of DUST fighting the ground battles of the warring space tycoons of EVE.

Or to quote CCP CEO Hilmar Petursson: "While the fleet does the flying, the infantry does the dying."

The trailer released at Cologne showed an intense, Killzone 2-style bout of run-and-gun action, featuring laser rifles, space jeeps, and copious motion blurring effects. Ultimately,

the entire landscape being fought over was atomised; hopefully play won't be interrupted too often when someone decides to nuke you from orbit (just to be sure).

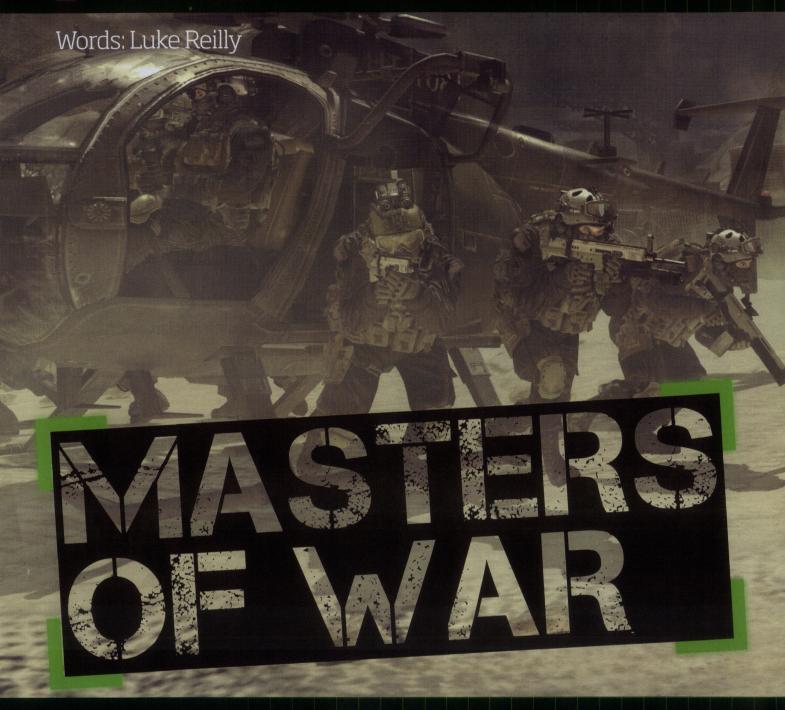
Battles fought and won in DUST will shape events in EVE. Yet while the collision of two virtual worlds will be epic, the real fireworks will begin when we see the collision of two cultures. What will happen when the online equivalents of Monty Burns and Homer Simpson are forced to work together? The results promise to be spectacular, but alas, we're unlikely to see this MMO odd couple perform this side of 2011. A James Cottee

- From the MMO masters
- ♠ Action looks awesome
- Complexity kills

OPS IS. Gunning for the Brain Bug







It's the game that has the whole industry running as publishers around the world push title after title into 2010 in an effort to avoid being anywhere near it. This is *Modern Warfare 2*, and this is our exclusive hands-on with the blockbuster event of 2009. Read on...

eah, well, we're a fairly macho company, we try for the manly accents where possible," says Infinity Ward lead artist Michael Boon following praise regarding Soap MacTavish's new Scottish bark. He's been rattling off some titbits about Modern Warfare 2 for a few minutes now.

Boon, a confident Taswegian who looks remarkably like James Blunt, is visibly at ease booting up the most anticipated game of 2009. If Boon's attitude is representative of the whole team, then Infinity Ward is dealing with the pressure you'd associate with developing what Activision is claiming could be the best-selling game ever with surprisingly little hassle.

He is Australian, though. A certain degree of relaxedness likely comes naturally.

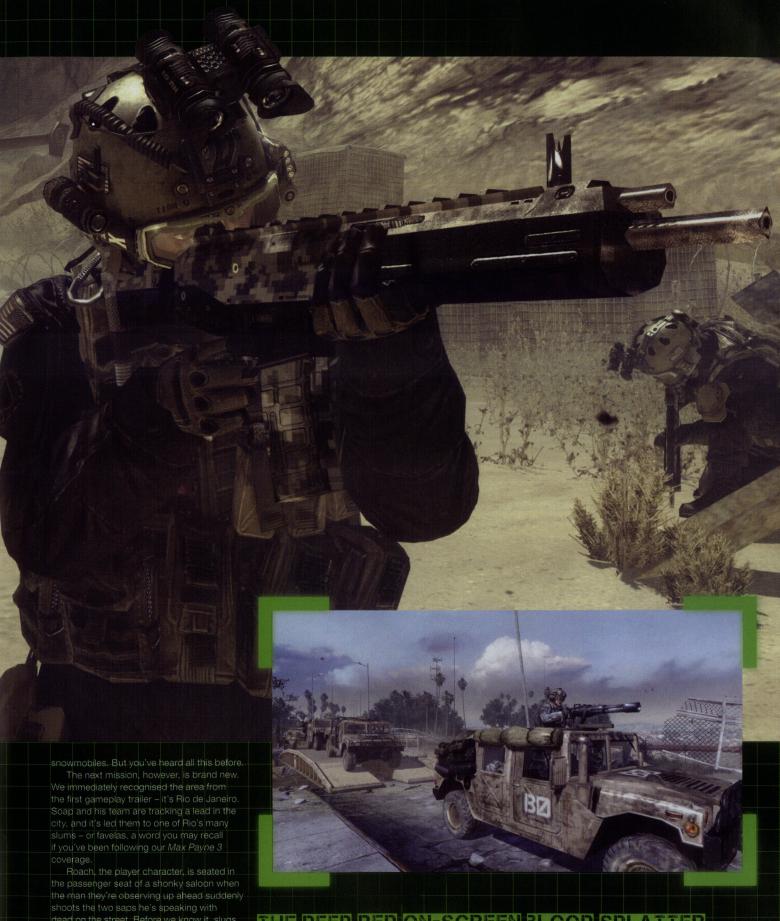
exclusive session is the snow level unleashed upon the world during this year's E3. It plays

out in a similar fashion, with Boon adding input along the way.

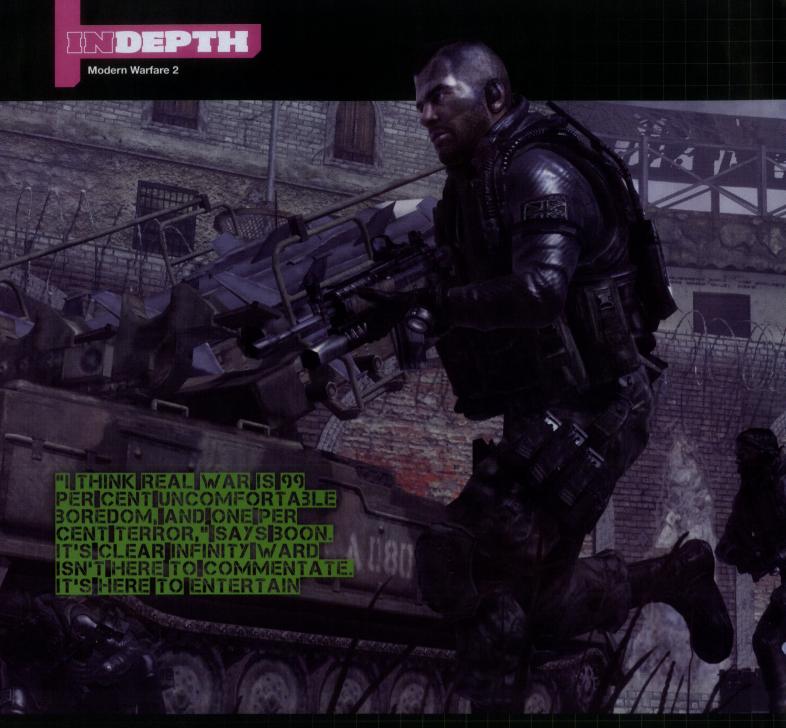
"You can fall, if I hold on for too long you'll see the cracks start spreading and eventually the ice'll break," says Boon as returning hardcase Soap and new man Roach scale an ice cliff deep in Kazakhstan.

"I fall every now and then, if I get distracted – like if my wife comes in holding a screaming baby or something."

We think he's exaggerating, although we're completely re-mesmerized by the tightly paced infiltration mission that follows. Roach's suppressed SMG taps out a deadly staccato throughout the blizzard-hounded airfield as he and Soap pick their way towards their objective. The mission goes pear-shaped when Soap is sprung, but Roach sets off a diversionary explosive in order to make a quick escape. The two blast their way down the airstrip and speed down the mountain on a couple of violently-appropriated



THE DEEP REDION-SCREEN BLOOD SPLATTER TO INDICATE PLAYER DAMAGE IS ALL-NEW, AND IT'S EERILY REALISTIC ACCORDING TO 300N IT'S ENTIRELY DOWN TO "ONE ARTIST WHO JUST KNEW EXACTLY HOW HE WANTED IT TO LOOK"



wants a word, and he's no good to anyone dead. After burying a bullet in his calf, Soap and the recently announced character Ghost take him behind closed doors for a chat. Ghost, with his skull-printed balaclava, is last seen toting a pair of jumper cables.

"Have you seen the Ghost statue?" asks Boon, grinning. "We have this full-size statue of the guy who has the jumper cables in that last scene, he has the balaclava with the skul painted on it. We had a full-size statue of him made."

It'd be nice to have the kind of coin to be able to do that stuff on a whim, we think, as Roach sets about sweeping the streets for another fugitive by the name of Roias.

It's bedlam, really. There are panicking civilians zigzagging everywhere. Boon has a word for it.

"Chaos," he says, and we agree.

It's certainly unlike any *Call of Duty* level we've ever played in the past. Mixing noncombatants in with militia in a distinctly urbasetting is new ground for the series.

"This was really great fun developing this area," says Boon. "It was so different to other stuff we've done. We made a lot of..."

Boon trails off as Roach fires a stream of

lead into a guerrilla's face. Another one ducks away out of view.

"These guys in the favela are not usually that mobile," he says. "But the trained troops in this game are far more mobile than they were in Modern Warfare. They almost never stay where they were"

Modern Warfare 2 may look a lot like the original, but there's been plenty of work going on under the hood over the past two years. Infinity Ward's proprietary IW 4.0 game engine has been prodded and massaged to churn out better visuals, bigger levels, more activity and improved Al. All of these things are obvious in this new level

"Ow, not a good time to reload," Boon says as a dog leaps towards Roach's neck. A quick burst outs the vicious animal down

Roach continues his way through the favela. Soap is shouting orders through his earpiece. Gun-toting goons are popping out from behind most corners. They're perched on rooftops and hiding behind slightly ajar doors (Modern Warfare's real-world ballistics return meaning stitching a line of bullets across a door will ventilate any scumbag stunid enough to hide behind it)

"I'm not gonna say it's free roaming but

you can tackle this level a few different ways, says Boon as Roach continues to work his way up a hill dotted with decaying buildings and shanties. It's a well-paced affair - the combination of shouted dialogue and heated action lends it some seriously cinematic choos

The squad is working in unison to try and

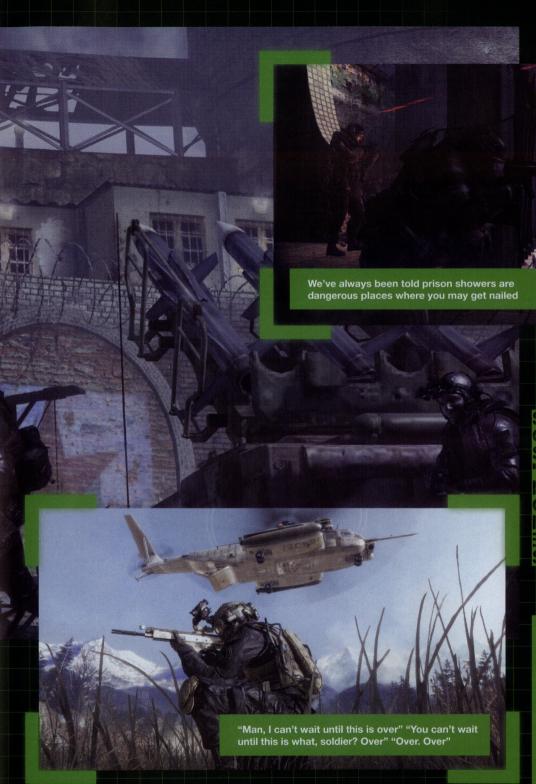
We spot him sprinting along a second storey balcony. We can't shoot him, we need him alive.

"He's gonna get away," shouts a squad member. We couldn't tell who.

"No he's not," says a calm Soap over the transmitter before he launches himself through a window, collects Rojas at waist height, crashes through the railing and pancakes our prey on the roof of a parked car below.

It's Hollywood-level stuff from the best first-person shooter craftsmen in the industry, and it's the kind of stuff we expect could cement Soap MacTavish as one of gaming's great tough guys.

But the demo isn't over yet. Boon is going to demonstrate the new Special Ops mode before letting us go hands-on with it.



IT MADE A MESS OF THE SINGLE-PLAYER, "ISAYS 300N. THERE. SIMPLE.

WHY NO CO-FOR THE MAIN

ORY MODE? MAND /ETRIED IT AND

ell you play or what difficulty you play on to

this time around called Spec-Ops, which is basically like time trials and co-op," says Boon. "Smaller missions with different objectives that you can play by yourself, or split-screen, or two-player online co-op."

Think the epilogue to the original Modern

Think the epilogue to the original Modern Warfare. Remember 'Mile High Club', the bonus mission on the jumbo jet, at the very end of the game? That's what we're talking about here.

"They're in five sections and when you start only Alpha will be unlocked," explains Boon. "In each different mission you can earn stars, one, two, three stars depending on how

They break down into a number of different tasks. 'Assault' is a simple here to there affair within a certain amount of time, killing as many enemies along the way. 'Sniper Fi' is a defence level, 'Stealth' is self-explanatory, and 'Elimination' pits you against a certain amount of enemies you need to kill to win. There's also a 'Race' mode – we saw a snowmobile race down the mountain from the Kazakhstan single-player level. Unless the snowmobile is the only vehicle in the game, there may be more vehicle races.

There are no checkpoints in these levels;

TAKEN TO

Modern Warfare 2's Task Force 141 is fictional, but it's based on a number of real-life 'Joint Task Forces'. Task Force 121, for instance, is one such multi-service force – a greatest hits compilation of the best the Special Forces have to offer. The spearhead of TF121 is a 40-man team made up of operators from the US Army's Delta Force, the US Navy's DEVGRU (SEAL Team Six), the US Army Rangers and the CIA's Special Activities Division, plus the US Army's 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (the Nightstalkers) as well as US Air Force Combat Controllers and Pararescue. At times operators from Coalition nations (specialists from the British and Australian SAS, Norwegian Marinejegerkommandoen and Polish GROM) augment TF121 and provide direct and indirect operational assistance.

This is the kind of shit that keeps terrorists up at night.

IN DEPTH

Modern Warfare 2

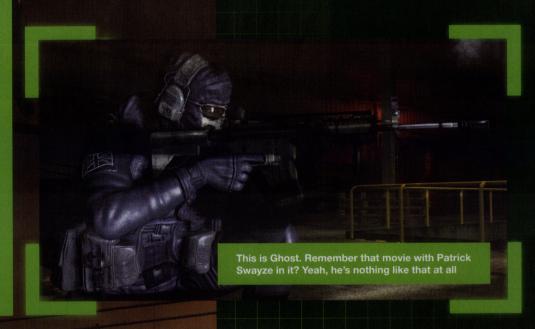


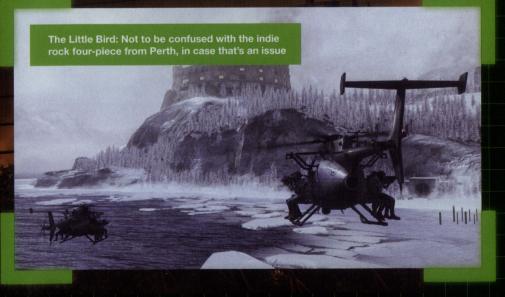
detail inside the stronghold is admirable; Infinity Ward has gone to great lengths selling this abandoned-looking holiday home as

DOGS OF WAR

Killer dogs have become somewhat of a staple with the *Call of Duty* franchise, but are there still hippies that have a bigger problem with players killing dogs than killing people?

"There was an online petition of course, to have the game banned, by somebody who'd never played it," says Boon. "We actually had a weird experience in Japan, I think it was at the Tokyo Game Show – we'd been told that the Japanese audience would respond horribly to killing dogs, and we demoed the Chernobyl level, and just the beginning of it, you know when you're sneaking in and there's the guy in the tower and you shoot him and if you miss him the dogs come after you? Mark Griggs, the model and voice for Sergeant Griggs, one of our animators, was doing the demo and he was so stressed out about not missing the shot so the dogs wouldn't come and he wouldn't have to kill the dog that he missed it three times in a row, and three times he didn't kill the dog. In the end it was a spectacularly good demo, and the crowd loved it."





"GENERALLY
EVERY ENEMY
WEAPON YOU
FIND WILL BE
DIFFERENT IT'LL
HAVE DIFFERENT
ATTACHMENTS,
DIFFERENT CAMO,"
300N SAYS

a makeshift terrorist hotel. There are guns resting against most walls and spread out all over the place. You can grab any of these weapons yourself, which Boon explains is pretty typical of Special Ops missions: "You can play any way you want and we tend to give you weapon caches." he says.

There's explosive-making equipment and materials lying about too and, for some reason, there's a blow-up doll in the bath. Infinity Ward is probably on to something here. Terrorists likely do have a hard time getting laid.

Boon moves around the map, mixing careful skulking with balls-out bravado. It's a hectic as the single-player, but we can see how Special Ops will encourage you to come back, over and over again.

Boon introduces us to the Juggernaut,

a unique enemy for Special Ops. He's taller, bigger and he's covered in bulletproof bits and bobs. He absorbs bullets like a heavily armed sponge.

"The Juggernaut has been in the game in different forms since we started making it but in the end we decided he was appropriate for this but not appropriate for the single-player game," says Boon. "He's kinda like a more traditional boss, he doesn't really make sense in a realistic game, but he's terrifying."

A few well-placed shots with the truckstopping .50 cal Barrett sniper rifle will take a Juggernaut down, but you don't want to be caught with your pants around your ankles by one of these guys.

Boon snatches up one of the new weapons, the AA-12.

"The AA-12 is an automatic shotgun

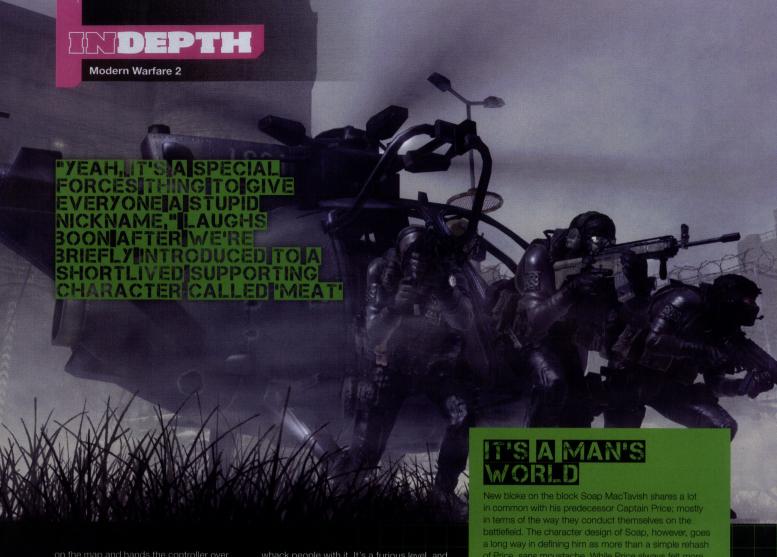
which is as cool as it sounds until you run out of ammo," he says. "Or you want to shoot a guy that's more than three feet away."

The AA-12 churns away, but it proves useless at touching the snipers in ghillie suits surrounding the house. He unsheathes the 3 arrett again for this, smashes a nearby window out with the butt and scans the forest or sharpshooters.

You can spot them seconds before they shoot at you thanks to the sun reflecting off their scopes

"We added that glint on the sniper scope when we became aware that fighting against ghillied snipers was just not fun," says Boon as the rifle cracks and a man dressed like a shrub tumbles theatrically to the ground. "They just kill you."

Boon successfully kills every enemy 🧇



in the wall of a prison shower and fighting our pick up a stray shield and hunker behind it.

quick too. It's over before we realise, and so is our demo. It certainly didn't disappoint.

surrounding WWII shooters and how there are too many of them. It's a false statement. The denying it was Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare the stratosphere and made it one of today's

in terms of the way they conduct themselves on the battlefield. The character design of Soap, however, goes a long way in defining him as more than a simple rehash of Price, sans moustache. While Price always felt more like a gruff father figure you didn't want to disappoint, the younger, shorn-scalped Soap feels more like your best mate's hardnut older brother. You remember that guy – he was tough, cool and was usually happy to buy you beer as long as you didn't whine like a little girl.

Swapping the '40s for the present day - it means this Christmas will be a present



POLYPHONY TO A L

au.playstation.com gran-turismo.com







Gran Turismo[®] on PSP,[™] play anywhere, anytime. Available 1st October on UMD or Digital Download from the PlayStation®Store







PlayStation_®Portable

THEMOS [AN INVESTOR'S GUIDE]

Words: James Cottee

o, the world economy collapsed. But now it's bouncing back – sort of. Maybe.

But is it really business as usual? Will things ever be the same? And do you really trust your superannuation fund to manage your life savings?

They say that crime doesn't pay, but we're beginning to wonder. With a view to informing our readers of the potential of 'alternative investments,' we've run a ruler over some of the most evil corporations in the world of video games.

Just how do they stack up compared to BHP, Telstra, and Westpac? The answers may surprise you.



FONTAINE **FUTURISTICS**

AS SEEN IN: BioShock **COMPANY PROFILE**

power-granting plasmids

CONTROVERSIAL BUSINESS PRACTICES

founded the Little Sisters Orphanage. Here

drain on resources. A company exists to benefit its

STOCK RECOMMENDATION:



BLACK MESA

AS SEEN IN: Half-Life

COMPANY PROFILE

A vast, secretive research compound working at the behest of the US Government, based deep in

CONTROVERSIAL BUSINESS PRACTICES

STOCK RECOMMENDATION:



Evil Corps



RELIABLE EXCAVATION É DEMOLITION/ BUILDERS LEAGUE

AS SEEN IN: Team Fortress 2 (The Orange Box)

COMPANY PROFILE

Operating from the shadows, powerful beyond measure, the gargantuan holding companies RED and BLU control all world governments.

CONTROVERSIAL BUSINESS PRACTICES

Credit where it's due: RED and BLU have created some incredible technological innovations. Personal invisibility devices, automated sentry guns, workable man-portable mini-guns, and other gadgets that push the boundaries of science fiction have become murderous fact in the hands of RED and BLU scientists.

Yet while we dare not doubt their technical expertise, we do doubt their judgment. For there is no diplomacy, commerce, or even common sense to the way these two firms resolve their conflicts. Instead, they pit teams of equally matched (and equally depraved) military specialists at each other's throats, mowing down wave after wave of cannon fodder in a shocking misallocation of human resources. This is not how you make money.

While we hesitate to endorse any form of corporate lunacy, statistics suggest that the BLU team wins slightly more often than RED. This is in stark contrast to the events depicted in the recent series of promotional trailers, suggesting RED may have a marginally superior marketing department.

Forget about buying shares in RED and BLU. We suspect investors would be better off taking their money to the racetrack.

STOCK RECOMMENDATION:

Avoid



APERTURE SCIENCE

AS SEEN IN: Portal (The Orange Box)

COMPANY PROFILE

A company that mass-produced shower curtains for the US military during the Cold War. The name was chosen purely for marketing purposes, as the firm did no scientific research until its founder's death in 1978. Subsequent innovations included the Heimlich Counter-Manoeuvre, the Take-A-Wish Foundation, and Project Portal, which led to the creation of a 'man-sized ad-hoc quantum tunnel through physical space with possible applications as a shower curtain'

CONTROVERSIAL BUSINESS PRACTICES

Its corporate history has shown time and again Aperture Science competes directly with Black Mesa for US Government funding. Aperture Science almost invariably lost. Failed projects include a line of mercury-injected shower curtains intended to assassinate whomever uses them. Yet the company's greatest folly was the creation of GLaDOS, the Genetic Lifeform and Disc Operating System. Upon completion, this super-computer flooded the Aperture Science research bunker with a deadly neurotoxin, and has subsequently been conducting horrifying tests on human clones.

Even ignoring the gross misallocation of resources and the death of all staff, Aperture Science is a basket case, existing only as a function of the bloodlust of the United States Senate.

STOCK RECOMMENDATION:

Avoid.

GENTEK

AS SEEN IN: Prototype

COMPANY PROFILE

World leader in genetic engineering

CONTROVERSIAL BUSINESS PRACTICES

In cooperation with the US Military, GENTEK created a virus going by the innocuous title of 'Dx-1118 variant A'. This virus was originally tested with a view to creating a biological weapon that could eliminate certain races while leaving others unharmed – a Eugenic Neutron Bomb, if you will.

In theory, it could be programmed to, say, kill all the Belgians in a given city, while sparing the French. In practice, it tends to infect everyone, transforming them into horrifying pointy-tentacled blob monsters. Any residents miraculously unaffected by the virus are in turn slain by the afore-mentioned horrifying pointy-tentacled blob monsters.

While this could well be a highly profitable weapon, its first widespread deployment killed most of the population of Manhattan. A polymorphic mutant blob infused with the genetic memories of the virus's creator in turn singled out the GENTEK headquarters for retribution, destroying millions in equipment and murdering several key staff.

It almost goes without saying that by wiping out Wall Street the incident also wreaked colossal damage on the world economy.

While the development and fielding of ghoulish genetic viruses is definitely a growth industry, GENTEK's failures in both quality control and human resources cannot be ignored.

We'd say that GENTEK stock is only good for toilet paper, but since all shares are electronic these days you'd have to print them out first. Like the company itself, this exercise is more trouble than it's worth.

STOCK RECOMMENDATION:

Avoid.



COMPANY PROFILE

A leading manufacturer of artificially intelligent robots for both civilian and military use. Also designs, builds, and manages gargantuan subterranean fallout shelters – automated complexes designed to support life for decades, if not centuries.

CONTROVERSIAL BUSINESS PRACTICES

The company's robots are over-engineered to the point of absurdity. Rather than make a robot that propels itself on, say, wheels, Vault-tec engineers instead chose to create droids that totter around while balancing on atomic-powered rocket jets. That's not just a waste of energy – it's likely to burn a hold in your floor.

Yet the most bizarre action of the company was the creation of the Vaults. While marketed to the public as fallout shelters for use in the advent of the Holocaust, they were in fact a vast, sadistic social experiment. By neglecting to include vital supplies, or skewing the gender mix (1 male and 999 females, 999 males and 1 female, etc), the Vault-tec social engineers intended to induce and study a wide range of mental illnesses.

It was only an accident of history that the Vaults helped save the human race

Shocking? Yes. But more shocking still is that this multi-billion-dollar program was put into motion with no business plan to back it up. The Vaults were not created to make money. They were just some executive's sick joke.

STOCK RECOMMENDATION:

Avoic

ULTOR CORPORATION

RS SEEN IN: Saints Row 2,

COMPANY PROFILE

A diversified conglomerate with interests in fashion, property development, mining, and space exploration.

CONTROVERSIAL BUSINESS PRACTICES

Direct involvement in criminal activity is shortsighted by definition. More troubling is management's belief that some day Earth will 'run out' of natural resources and that industry will be forced to mine for ore on other planets. This was the same fallacy that led the 'Club of Rome' to publish their now-infamous report, The Limits to Growth, back in '72. These economic illiterates predicted that, based on current trends and 'known reserves', the world would run out of fossil fuels and industrial metals before the year 2000.

You may have noticed that we haven't. That's because the price of any substance rises in proportion to its scarcity, along with the incentive to find more of it, or a substitute that can do the same job. There is no conceivable scenario that would force any company to 'det its arse to Mars'.

So no: we're not running out of resources. But Ultor executives are clearly running low on brain cells

STOCK RECOMMENDATION:

Avoid.

UMBRELLA CORPORATION

AS SEEN IN: Resident Evil COMPANY PROFILE

Norld leader in genetic engineering, pharmaceuticals,

CONTROVERSIAL BUSINESS PRACTICES

Umbrella's most significant infractions against the laws of God and man pertain to the field of artificial viruses – bio-weapons that deform, mutate, and kill. Certainly, the scientists of Umbrella are to be commended for their diligence in creating such a vast battery of pathogens: the T-Virus, the T-Veronica Virus, the G-Virus, etc, etc.

Yet Umbrella's management class is grotesquely incompetent. The very idea of controlling a virus as a weapon is absurd, for once a life form is released into the environment, it cannot be controlled. Umbrella learnt this the hard way when an outbreak at the Arklay Training Facility led in turn to the deaths of the entire civilian population of Baccoon City.

While the virus was eventually contained when the US military destroyed the zombie-infested ruins with an atom bomb, Umbrella's reputation – and share price – never recovered.

STOCK RECOMMENDATION:

Avoid.



ABSTERGO INDUSTRIE:

AS SEEN IN: Assassin's Creed **COMPANY PROFILE**

CONTROVERSIAL BUSINESS PRACTICES

Kidnapping, murder, and world domination are all equally important topics on this company's Monday old group of devout assassins dedicated to balance bartender in order to utilise his genetic memory to an end to conflict

lucrative than peace (and being brainwashed).

Abstergo is also currently being investigated for caught. This is the reason behind their planned - after this they risk having their assets completely frozen. This may cause a problem.

STOCK RECOMMENDATION:



RESIR CORP

AS SEEN IN: Max Payne COMPANY PROFILE

CONTROVERSIAL BUSINESS PRACTICES

project to create stronger soldiers and boost their

This likely did wonders for cash flow temporarily,

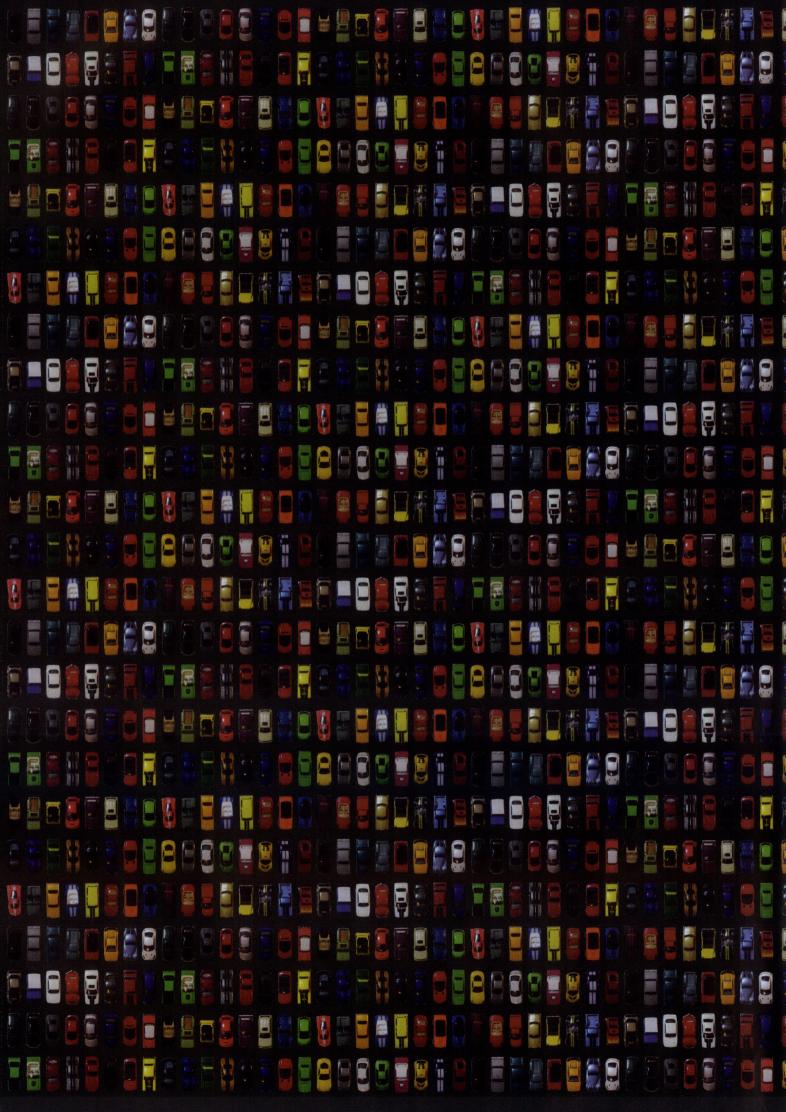
Since transferring to the DEA, Agent Payne has killed in the fracas when Agent Payne destroyed her helicopter as she tried to flee. Times look tough for Aesir Corp.

STOCK RECOMMENDATION:

PARTING THOUGHTS

Evil corporations certainly love to crush their rivals and ruin lives. Yet, from an investor's standpoint, they commit a far greater crime: they waste money. For that's all a company is, really – a means to an end.

The wages of sin are death, and the dividends of evil are embarrassingly low. *OPS* recommends its readers stick to sane investments, and leave the world of evil business to the madmen...





THEREARE CARS HERE.

TO AFFORD THIS MANY VEHICLES RIGHT NOW, YOU'D HAVE TO BE BY THE END OF THIS YEAR, HOWEVER, ALL YOU'I I NEED IS EULTIMATED SIMULATOR IS BACK >

Words: Luke Reilly



BOOM CRASH OPERA
In the following sequence you can see the Impreza that
was available at gamescom getting progressively more and
more damaged as it barges around the track. It seems
mostly cosmetic in this case, but we've been assured
reduced performance will factor into this somehow also.

























1306



ran Turismo 5 was first revealed at E3 2006. That's a long time ago no matter how you skin it. Since then speculative and not-so-speculative release dates have come and gone, and yet it remains in development. It's tough to fathom why the project has been allowed to take this long: GT5 will be a system seller. If past performance is anything, GT5 will be Sony's best-selling firstparty title on PS3 by a gigantic margin.

It's odd, then, that the release date millions of fans worldwide have been vearning for has just been revealed with no fanfare whatsoever. Just a small reference on an official brochure handed out at gamescom, in German. Luckily you don't need to be fluent in German in understand what 4. Quartal 2009 means.

So, we lied. It's not a date. At least, not an exact one. But it's the closest we've got - and this time (apparently) they mean it. Sony Australia still won't comment, but it was a legitimate source and we're also hearing increasingly louder rumours regarding a PS3 Slim/GT5 bundle just in time for Christmas. Should this happen, the only bad news here is for anyone else releasing a racing game this Christmas, because GT5 is about to hang a 220kW carbon-fibre turd on it.

The long-awaited release 'window' wasn't the only GT5 news to flow out of Cologne either. Far from it, in fact. We've learnt more about GT5 in the past week or so than we have since it was announced.

GT godfather Kazunori Yamauchi wasn't willing to let the total number of vehicles slip

out when quizzed at gamescom, although a feature set from Polyphony Digital's Japanese website that was quickly seized upon and translated by the rabid GT fans at www.gtplanet. net (and shortly afterwards, mysteriously vanked down from Polyphony's website) reported GT5 will boast 1000 cars. The German pamphlet claimed the same number, and Yamauchi has since confirmed what we read on Polyphony's website was all true - they just hadn't planned to speak about it yet. Ferrari,

Bugatti and Lamborghini will feature along with, we assume, all the best stuff from GT4 and the last five years of motoring. The all-electric 0-100 in 3.9 seconds Tesla Roadster will also be included, for instance. No official word on whether Holden and Ford Australia have got the nod, but both featured in GT4 so we'd be very surprised if they suddenly didn't make the cut this time.

Of this 1000, 170 of these will have full interior modelling that corresponds to external vehicle damage. Kazunori has himself confirmed not every car will sport a damage model, just specific sets. This seems consistent with the earlier rumour damage would be focused on race cars. This won't please everyone, but we're content to save the biffo for the proper race cars and leave the rest in showroom shape. You wouldn't catch the Stig doing power laps in a beaten up Aston Martin. and to be honest, we'd rather not either. Cars look better intact. If they didn't, they'd smash them to bits before they sold you one.

Disappointingly it seems Porsche will remain absent from the GT series as the Stuttgart stalwart has an 'exclusive deal' elsewhere. This 'exclusive deal' remains puzzling though; Porsche models feature in the Need for Speed series and Microsoft's Forza Motorsport series, so one does wonder just how exclusive this deal really is. Porsche tuning company RUF will almost certainly feature though, which will soften that blow.

Kazunori told reporters that downloadable content for GT5 is a "definite possibility", but

there are no further details. Realistically, we're willing to bet DLC (new cars, etc.) is a given.

GT5 is also set to feature more than 20 courses and more than 60 layouts. Don't forget one of those courses is the Top Gear Test Track. With 1000 cars, at (conservatively speaking) an average of one minute 30 seconds a lap, that's 25 hours of power laps alone. Think about that.

As for any rumours regarding custom track creation, Kazunori told press it's something Polyphony Digital "hasn't really thought about."

Other interesting nuggets gleaned from the info released on Polyphony's website related to YouTube replay output, custom soundtracks (use songs from your PS3 hard-drive) and head-tracking by the PSEye in cabin view. We imagine the Tokyo Game Show will shed some more light on a lot of this

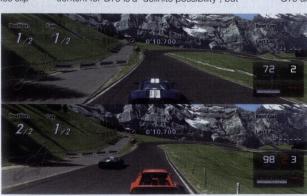
Excitingly however, attendees at gamescom in Cologne were, for the first time, finally able to get their hands on GT5 and play it. The news on this front is good.

There was only one track on display (Tokyo R246, from GT3 and GT4) and the only playable car was a Subaru Impreza WRC 2009 - but it did showcase the new damage model quite nicely. The bonnet, for instance, will spring up after a nasty impact revealing the highly detailed engine underneath. Doors will shear off, and spoilers will dangle. It's the kind of stuff we've seen for years elsewhere, but never in Gran Turismo - so it was a bit special.

GT5 also sports a completely revamped

physics model; all-new apparently. We wonder how much more realistic it can get, considering 500 to 700 parameters defined the driving characteristics of the car physics model in GT4 and lap times were, according to the developers, as close as to within 2% of their real-life equivalent. Hopefully we'll have an answer for you after a far more extensive hands-on.

We'll have much, much more on this after the Tokyo Game Show and leading up to its





REVIEW

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We choose to review our games on a super-slick Full HD 1080p 40"
Bravia X-series for the best picture possible. This sucker melts eyeballs!



REVIEW RATING

PlayStation GOLD AWARD IO Incredible: Perfection is relative and elusive, and no game will ever be perfect. Our 10 doesn't mean a game is flawless, it means a game has done everything it set out to do in an amazing fashion and thus it deserves our highest possible praise.

PlayStation SILVER AWARD Excellent: An outstanding game, either limited by its scope, sequel status (and lack of improvement) or a few minor blemishes from being a 10.

Likely one of the very best in its genre, a 9 comes with high praise

PlayStation BRONZE AWARD Great: Still well ahead of the pack in most departments, despite a few issues here and there. Thoroughly recommended.

7 Good: A robust package that does a solid job despite a bunch of moderate problems. Enjoyable in parts, just not fantastic overall.

Decent: This game will have some noticeable flaws that may make it hard to recommend to those who aren't fans of the genre, but it will do more right than it does wrong. Just.

Mediocre: A conceded pass, if you know what we mean. Half okay, but half-busted. Might scrape by for fans, but few will want to play a game that half sucks.

Poor: Anything below 5, strictly speaking, is a fail – but there are degrees of 'bad' just as there are degrees of 'good'. A 4 is unrefined, partially broken and poorly designed.

Very disappointing: Things start to go very wrong herefundamentally flawed in many ways, boring and close to pointless.

Terrible: Virtually nothing good here at all, and definitely not worth the effort of removing the wrapper.

The worst: Reserved for the very worst garning could ever offer. A broken, offensive mess without a single redeeming quality.

SHIFT is astounding. It's a game that demands to be played in the cockpit view, as here it really comes alive

NEED FOR SPEED SHIFT





hink for a moment how incredible Uncharted: Drake's Fortune was when it was initially released - and, frankly, still is. Hollywood-level production values, amazing graphics, impeccable pacing... the list of things Uncharted did right is long and distinguished. For some time Uncharted was easily the best looking game available on any console, ever. It was a visual tour de force, and a fantastic game to boot. Imagine then, if Uncharted was only utilising 30 per cent of the PS3's power. Just ponder how much room that would leave for improvement.

Because, according to Naughty Dog, it's true. The company line from the team is that Uncharted: Drake's Fortune only exploited a meagre 30 per cent of the juice that was available. This statement is made all the more intriguing by the follow up claim that Uncharted

2 taps it out completely.

We're huge fans of Naughty Dog. We'll maintain until we're blue in the face that the Santa Monica studio is one of the world's most consistent developers, but some of this percentage speak could be spin. We're certainly not here to tell you Uncharted 2 looks and plays 70 per cent better than the last one but that's more testament to the overwhelming quality of the original rather than any flaws we can find with this one. Still, even if Uncharted 2 was one per cent better than the last one it'd be the year's most essential game to date.

And it is.

For those late to the party, or perhaps those who've just picked up a PS3 Slim, the



Uncharted series revolves around the exploits of professional treasure-hunter Nathan Drake. Wily and capable, this globetrotting dude raider, and descendent of famous explorer Sir Francis Drake, is as handy with a shotgun as he is with a map, and his rogue-like qualities and half-tucked shirt also make him a massive smash with the ladies. He's one of the most three-dimensional and likeable game characters of this generation, and a true candidate for the all-new official PS3 mascot. Uncharted 2 picks up a few years after the events of Drake's Fortune, which we won't spoil here because if you haven't played it already we beg you to do so. We can't stress that enough.

The McGuffin this time around is the

legendary Cintamani Stone, a wish-fulfilling jewel of both Buddhist and Hindu traditions, which comes to Drake's attention while digging through Marco Polo's disastrous voyage home from China in 1292. After spending close to 20 years in the court of the emperor Kublai Khan, Marco Polo set sail with 14 ships and over 600 passengers and crew - but when he arrived home 18 months later only one ship and 18 of the passengers had survived. Marco Polo never revealed the events of that trip, but Drake discovers he had gone on a secret expedition to find the kingdom of Shambhala -Shangri-La - to recover the Cintamani Stone. Setting off on a trail that will take him deep into the Himalayas, Drake sets about doing what











66 Everything about Uncharted 2 still **looks** and feels natural, which is key "



INFO

GENRE: ACTION RELEASE: OCTOBER 2009 DISTRIBUTOR: SONY DEVELOPER: NAUGHTY DOG PRICE: \$109.95

Marco Polo could not. According to legend, the stone can manifest anything according to one's desires - food, treasure, anything - and remove sickness and suffering. According to Uncharted 2, the stone is an enormous raw sapphire. The Cintamani Stone, then, is beyond value either way - so it's no surprise Drake isn't the only one on the case.

We'll try not to elaborate much further lest we start ruining things. Rest assured things rollick along at breakneck pace, and that this pulp adventure is even more exciting than his last. It begins with Drake, badly injured and bleeding, trapped in a train carriage dangling over a cliff. Something has gone horribly wrong, but you won't find out what for a while. After

escaping the carriage the story picks up a few months earlier when Drake is coerced into picking up the trail of Marco Polo's lost fleet by his old friend Harry Flynn, a sly Brit, and his old flame and Aussie opposite number, Chloe Fraser – a slightly more ocker Lara Croft with smaller boobs.

Elena and Sully return, joined by Elena's new cameraman Jeff, and you'll meet other helpful characters later on. The new bad guy is Zorin Lazarevic, a war crim NATO believes dead - but our heroes quickly find out otherwise. Like the first game, expect twists, and don't expect you know everyone's agenda.

There's somewhere in the vicinity of 90 minutes of cinematics in Uncharted 2, and they're even better than they were in the original Uncharted. The scripting, the motioncapture, the organic dialogue delivery - no game does it better. In fact, there are films that can't get it this right - and with 90 minutes worth interspersed throughout the adventure Uncharted 2 basically is a film - one that goes for 10 or so hours where you get play all the good bits yourself. Probably quite a bit longer if you ramp up the difficulty level (which ranges from 'Very Easy' - with aiming assist and increased health - to 'Crushing'). That's the level of quality we're talking here. There's far more comic relief and casual cursing this time around too, and it makes the characters all the more likeable

It's really business as usual for Drake and fans in Uncharted 2. Naughty Dog has succeeded in making the combat and puzzlesolving elements of the series compliment each other better, and there are a greater variety of levels (and more verticality in said levels) than the original. You'll go from a Turkish museum

REVIE

Uncharted 2: Among Thieves

ONLY ON PLAYSTATION 3
In an interview with Ars Technica, co-president of Naughty Dog Christophe Balestra recently said that Uncharted 2: Among Thieves would not be possible on the Xbox 360.

"I guarantee that this game couldn't be working on Xbox 360," said Balestra. "It would be impossible. I'm 100 percent sure of this."

Balestra said the Sony console has the advantage of its processing units, mandatory hard drive and the capacity of the Blu-ray discs

"It's the combination of Blu-ray and hard drive. You can play the entire game without loading. We don't require an install. We're doing all the post-processing effects on the SPUs. The quality of the depth of field we have, you can't do that on the Xbox."







Yeah, it's so ice to be here"



to the jungles of Borneo, and from a wartorn city to an ice cavern to name but a few locations. But it's still very much a similar game. There has been some massaging of his moveset and capabilities, and Drake is now a bit more acrobatic than before, but it still feels nice and familiar. None of this is a bad thing.

Animations have definitely benefited from two years on the hoist - they're even more seamless than ever. Everything about Uncharted 2 still looks and feels natural, which is key.

The melee system is where some of the more noticeable improvements have taken place. There are more moves - the flying headbutt is our favourite - and there's a bigger emphasis on context sensitive attacks, so Drake will shove enemies off ledges and thrash them over low obstacles more often. Tougher enemies can get the drop on you and pin Drake in headlocks and the like - but a little mild slo-mo will give you the opportunity to counter if you're quick enough. Heavilyarmoured enemies need to be countered in order to knock off their helmet and deliver the crucial final blow.

The stealth system is new too, and we like it. It's mostly there as another option on the











battlefield. You can sneak around and snap necks from behind, or you can lurk behind cover and tap @ when an enemy comes within reach to lunge out, grab them and swing their face into a wall, or bring your elbow down on their bonce.

It's no shock Uncharted 2 looks incredible, but the actual level of detail has shocked us. From the opening seconds you'll be completely wowed with the degree of care that's been taken with every millimetre of every level. Fabric, metal, snow, skin, stone - this is a truly amazing looking game. Marvel at the way Drake's hair wiggles in the breeze at high altitudes. Gawk at the perfectly-rounded shape of Chloe's arse in her cargo pants. There isn't anything in this game that doesn't look good.

The sound is brilliant too. The dialogue is the best in gaming, and we're totally hooked on the rousing original score.

It's true Uncharted 2 is a very linear game, but it never pretends to be anything else. It's a very deliberately modelled experience; tight, scripted and exciting. People may criticise the fact you always tend to feel mostly safe, even when the world around you is bending and breaking - but you'd never sit and think Indiana Jones is about to die 45 minutes into his

films either - and the tension still exists there. Things aren't ever quite as remarkable after multiple viewings, but that's just a side-effect of everything being so polished and engaging first time around.

It's true Drake feels a bit skatey at times, and that he's not quite capable of fine movements - but the game doesn't require you to be ludicrously precise, so it's not an issue. At most times it feels like the game knows what you're trying to make it do, and it just does it. It's not playing the game for you, but it's not pointlessly punishing you. This alleviates frustrating trial and error bullshit.

Still, we just don't have any real problems with this game. There are titles that do shooting better, and there are titles that make climbing marginally more involving - but there are no titles that weave everything together more successfully than Uncharted 2.

We haven't even mentioned the multiplayer options, although we'll touch on those again post-release. Then there's the Machinima mode, where players can create their own short films within the game. With all the camera options this comes with, the confidence this mode demonstrates Naughty Dog has in its assets and animations should not be

understated. Both of these additional elements take what was already a virtually perfect actionadventure and create an unmatched package.

It's the duck's nuts, the bee's knees and the dog's bollocks. It's any kind of combination of animal anatomy you can think of. Believe the hype, Uncharted 2 doesn't disappoint. It's everything we'd hoped for. We were giddy booting it up, and the grin never left our faces. Uncharted 2 is the best action game of the year - perhaps ever. It's the kind of game it's extraordinarily difficult to stop playing, because it gives and gives. Quitting Uncharted 2 is like stopping Raiders of the Lost Ark halfway through - you just want to sit back down and keep going. The spectacular combination of generation-defining visuals, high adventure and cinematic intensity makes Uncharted 2 absolutely essential. There aren't any reasons not to own this game. - Luke Reilly

FINAL SAY:

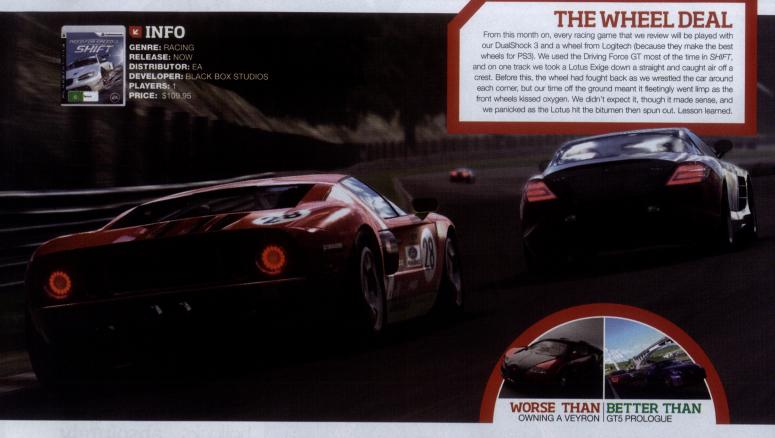


- Stunning to look at, equally stunning to experience
- Impeccably crafted in every single department
- Breakneck pace, exciting as hell
- Cinema mode will reap rad usercreated content

VERDICT: Uncharted 2 is the reason Hollywood should be worried abou games. Incredible



Need for Speed SHIFT



NEED FOR SPEED SHIFT

Refined. Impressive. Compelling

hey're the best words to describe the latest title in NFS's rocky history, as SHIFT is a title that's clearly learned from its forebear's mistakes. Forget about boy-racers, petty rivalries and imposing storylines. From its graphics, sound and presentation to progression throughout championships, SHIFT is a glorious thrill and it's achieved a new pinnacle for which it should be lauded, both as a Need For Speed title and racing game altogether.

Refined. This game knows what you want and is happy to give it. While the last title, *Pro Street*, to break the *NFS* formula dabbled in circuit racing and at the sim end of town, the result felt underdone. *SHIFT* revisits the circuit territory but isn't a hard-core driving simulator, though it does want to be taken seriously with its cache of exotic and well-known motors.

Jump in to a career – the meat of the game – and you take on the life of a race driver, given the choice of a Toyota AE86, Ford Cosworth, Ford Foucs ST and a few other nice though lower-powered machines as your initial purchase. As you progress beyond each 'tier', of which there are five, and earn more money you can either bolt on new parts to make your car compliant with the race spec or pick a new ride.

Progress out of the lowly tier 1 and you'll hit some of the world's most lusted after cars. Nissan's newest GT-R and the older but beastly R34]. BMW and Audi are represented with the

M3 GTR and R8 respectively, and the 10-radiator, 1000hp behemoth Bugatti Veyron, all add to the 70-strong roster of motors. Where *Gran Turismo* bombards with infinite revisions, *SHIFT* cuts out the crap and leaves in desirable consumer and prototype cars.

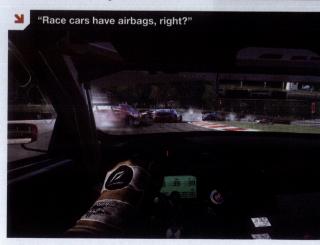
Sure, it treads a well-rehearsed formula, borrowing from Codemaster's *GRID*, Polyphony Digital's *Gran Turismo* and even Bizarre Studio's Xbox racer, *PGR*. Perform well and you're given access to higher-tiered events via an invitation. Of course, you can choose not to do them at that point, as you'll hit them eventually, but the extra cash they give is welcome. The invitationals often provide you with a car for each event – say, a manufacturer battle between Subaru's WRX and Mitsubishi's Evolution – so you can leave your lowered tiered car in the garage.

Beyond racing there's also *GRID*-like drift events, where the point is to beat the score of the bloke before you. Get as close as you can to the apex of the turn with your nose while feathering the accelrator and micro-adjusting the wheel. It's all about the competition rather than the 'attitude'.

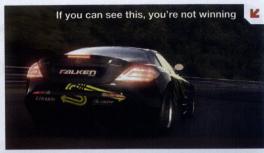
Impressive. Graphically, SHIFT is astounding. It's a game that demands to be played in the cockpit view, as here it really comes alive. EA have promoted SHIFT as being a true driver experience, and rightly so. Each car's dashboard is recreated in painstakingly

detail, and it's possible to turn off the HUD and rely purely on your car's instrument panel for your speed and gear selection.

Staying in the cockpit also provides one of the game's highlights. Screaming down a straight at your vehicle's top speed blurs out everything but the track ahead. Clip a competitor awkwardly and you'll likely end up skittling off the track, despite ABS and traction control wizardry. Sudden negative acceleration, like hitting a tire wall or barricade at triple figures, turns the screen









SHIFT is aware the birthplace of racing is Europe and treats it accordingly

radical rides using its in-game editor. So if you want to make your purple and green pearlescent Beemer that much more gnarly with 20-inch wheels, so be it.

We want you to show off your design chops and make a machine that wouldn't look out of place on a touring car circuit, or doing donuts in your local car park, or even for sale on the corner of your street for \$100. Turn to page 26 and you could win the opportunity to drive a race-spec V8 for a day!

black and white, your driver's heartbeat to thump and he'll suck in a lung full of air. As the colour slowly drains back in and your ticker backs off playing a rumba, there's usually a spider web of cracks in the windshield of your prized machine. It's a violent way to meet a solid object and is utterly brilliant. If you haven't picked up a HD display yet, this is damn good reason to do so.

Black Box has given SHIFT aural chops. The whine and burble of each car adds immeasurably to the overall sensation, and the cacophony of yowling gearbox combined with screeching tires and whining brakes means you'll come away exhausted.

Compelling. Depending on your driving style, you're awarded points at the end of each race according to how precise or aggressive you are. Stick to the driving line or pass a car without touching earns 'precision' points. Shunt a competitor off track, slide or constantly draft and you're considered 'aggressive'. All this goes towards earning badges and your own motif, which gets added to at every point milestone. It's a method for online competitors to gauge just how you drive. Smartly, each badge you earn, be it for consecutively placing on a podium a certain amount of times, or driving cars for a number of kilometres, can then be applied to your car's

livery (see 'skinned alive').

SHIFT bucks the trend of all-American games, and treats you as an intelligent racer. If you want to get under the hood and tinker with the array of gear ratios, camber settings and tire PSI, go for it. If you just want to race, that's fine too. It truly is a must-have package. A thoroughly entertaining and a pivotal part of the Speed franchise and the racing landsacpe in general, we want more like this. . Paul Taylor



- Spectacular graphic and sound effects
- Steady difficultly level
- Intelligently presented



Just needs a few more cars. The promised DLC will fix that

VERDICT: Superbly presented and a blast to play this is a bold step in the right direction for the NFS series



GUITAR HERO 5

Saturday night's all right for fighting...

uitar Hero 5. 85 songs, new modes, easier-to-navigate menus, drop-in/drop-out party play, new in-game challenges... there have been improvements, despite what you may think.

Presentation has been bumped up a notch too, and it no longer looks like everything's been lacquered with a thick coat of vegetable oil. It all looks a little more grown up, but the series still has some way to go to match the flair in the presentation department displayed by its more critically successor competitor. *Rock Band* employs all manner of filters and tricks to really sell a performance. In comparison, *Guitar Hero 5* still feels quite sterile.

Unfortunately our qualms don't end there. Guitar Hero 5 doesn't really feel as 'definitive' as you'd expect. Rather than a tracklist full of alltime heavy hitters – which is kind of what we'd expect at this point in the series – there's a real flavour-of-the-week thing going on here. Brian Bright, the game's project director, has called the track list "fresh" (25 per cent of the songs were released within the last 18 months, and more than 50 per cent were released post-2000). Concentrating so heavily on new music does compromise the game somewhat; it seems to have come at the expense of a better range of bona fide classics.

GH Tunes has seen tweaking, but we're not sure who bothers. Also, not locking the cameo avatars to their own songs was a bit of a sin. The ability to get Kurt Cobain up on stage to any song in the game makes a bit of a mockery out of what's intended to be a celebration.

Guitar Hero 5 is proof Neversoft is getting the hang of this caper, but it could've benefited a lot from a more proven tracklist. **Luke Reilly**

FINAL SAY:



- Simple interface, party mode
- First GH title to be crosscompatible with older versions



- The performances are still missing spark
- Track list lacks some credibility

VERDICT: Good - and improving a lot - but the '25 per cent trendy' tracklist hurts it.





THE BEATLES: ROCK BAND We've got blisters on our fingers

his isn't like AC/DC Live – this is a full game, completely dedicated to The Beatles. You'll slide into the loafers of John, Paul, George or Ringo and chart their meteoric rise to international superstardom, from their first gigs in the Cavern Club to their final performance atop the Apple Building. It's also very, very good.

The visuals themselves, from the evolving avatars and costumes to the stages, sets and recording booths, are beautiful. The gameplay is pically right on the button. The mixes are great. Its all close to faultless.

The lack of drum fills is odd (and they're sorely ed), but we'd assume this stems from some of agreement with the stakeholders here ere seem to be a lot of them). We imagine getting the project off the ground was difficult enough convincing the surviving Liverpudlians to let pur ers freestyle over music that they don't ever permit anyone to even sample was probably a stretch. Other than some of the more simple tracks being fraction less exciting to play as we'd have hoped (though there aren't as many of those as we'd anticipated), there really isn't much wrong with this game at all.

Obviously, The Beatles: Rock Band lives and

dies on your own thoughts regarding the Fab Four, but we just can't over-exaggerate just how incredible the presentation is. This game is far more than just a series of scrolling notes; it's a tribute like none other. From screaming hordes of women to psychedelic trips through acid-fuelled imaginations. Harmonix included it all.

That faithfulness, combined with the razorsharp Rock Band underpinnings, makes for a truly spectacular music game. **Luke Reilly**

FINAL SAY:



- A landmark collaboration
 Incredible presentation
- No exporting, unfortunately
 No drum fills

VERDICT: Outstanding

9









INFO

GENRE: FLIGHT RELEASE: NOW DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT DEVELOPER: TRANSMISSION GAMES PLAYERS: 1, 1-16 PRICE: \$99.95

FOCUS, DAMN YOU!

Using some slick flying you can manoeuvre yourself behind your enemies. This is a perfect time to perform a focus or Ace kill. Once the reticle fills up and goes red, you can hold and shoot the tender bits of the enemy planes. Sadly the resulting animations are never terribly exciting – why can't we see the pilot's brains shooting out of the front window?



he problem with WWII fighter plane games is that the idea of dogfights is much more exciting than a simulation. From a distance dozens of old school planes diving and soaring balletically through the air, riddling their enemies with bullet holes is cool as hell.

However, when you're sitting in the actual cockpit it's more: turning the plane, getting close enough to shoot your enemy, shoot your enemy, rinse and repeat.

You have one type of weapon – the machine gun (well, bombs too – but they're not going to help you against other planes) and that's it. Now, HOE tries to add some tricks. If you go high into the air then shoot an enemy as you're diving downwards you'll pull off a sweet kill. Also you can take down enemies with one hit when you focus. This is accomplished by putting your plane's reticle on your enemy, waiting for it to charge up, then press • This will slow things down Matrix-style and you can aim for the enemy's weak spots: engines, rear gunner, the pilot, etc.

You can also chain these kills together for bonus points, although it's quite unwieldy.

HOE has been giving the rather unenviable task of following the extremely sexy (although horribly named) IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds of Prey.

Straight up you should know it's not as good as *IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds of Prey*. So if you've been sitting around wondering which WWII plane shooter to get, you have your answer.

That caveat aside, *HOE* is a fun ride. While it lasts. Following the not-bad-not-great *Heroes Over the Pacific* the single player campaign has you playing various characters in different planes, fighting in different arenas of war.

The game plays extremely arcade-y, even

in "simulation" mode. It's actually not bad in terms of gameplay, and the voice acting, while clichéd (the go-getter Yank, the thoughtful Pom, the drunken, violent Scottish bloke) gives the experience a bit of humanity.

Unfortunately the presentation, especially when set against the beautiful, crisp *IL-2* Sturmovik: Birds of Prey is rather poor. Textures look good... when they're not flickering on and off, and the explosions – essential to any plane game – are a bit crap.

There are some lovely moments – defending the white cliffs of Dover or dodging through the dark searchlight filled skies of burning London to name but two – and the multiplayer option of 16-plane dogfights is dandy. However unimpressive graphics and animation make this an experience that is better than average, but really not much more than that. Anthony O'Connor

FINAL SAY:



- Easy to pick up, hard to put down
- Arresting environments and lots of planes
 Strangely inconsistent graphics



- and animation
- Challenging but not very long

VERDICT: A plain plane game with some stand-out moments. A little rough, but not bad.





You just gotta roll with it

t's impossible not to smile when playing Katamai Forever. To be grim whilst this game is in your console means you are either a puppy-kicker or a block of granite.

Let's be clear: the core of the game hasn't changed since its last outing on PS2. You still take control of a sticky ball – the katamari – rolling it around to collect stuff, which, like a four-year-old's hands after an ice-cream, maintains its viscous nature no matter how much it picks up. And what you do collect goes from pins and cookies to cats, dogs, swingsets, people, cars and buildings, all to replace stars in the galaxy after a colossal blunder involving the King Of All Cosmos and his robotic doppelganger, the RoboKing.

Series veterans will be familiar with the plot (it has effectively been recycled twice now), and its ridiculousness threatens to border on tired if it weren't for the unique charm of creator Keita Takahashi (also responsible for Noby Noby Boy) and the lavish presentation. From the front end to the eclectic mid-stage cartoons, and graphics and music in the game proper, this is a colourful dreamscape. It's also packed with wit and is, at times, laugh-out-loud funny. The RoboKing will scold you for failing a stage, as your impotence is "giving me a migraine," he says. "DOWNLOADING MIGRAINE PATCH.

Forever is also dastardly tricky to master and is far from a mass, mindless collect-a-thon. In one stage it might be you're tasked with collecting expensive items from a ritzy bedroom and judged on how expensive your katamari

is once the time's up, or perhaps requested to collect the biggest cow or bear you can, purely at the whimsy of the King. To do so means you'll have to roll up anything but bovines or ursines to increase your mass, and then absorbing the largest animal you find. In some cases you don't collect anything at all, like the stage where you need to water the dusty ground by rolling a soggy katamari over the earth and resoaking it in nearby pools of water, or racing around a circuit.

It requires practice to overcome the beguiling stages and memorise the best route to take. The Prince can now jump by flicking the controller or tapping a button, an inclusion that helps enormously, while a static power-up sucks in nearby objects to increase your mass. Although many stages are re-hashed from other games in the series, there's enough here to tempt veterans back for more. Newcomers should not hesitate to jump in.

While it would be trite to say the experience lasts forever, it is a game that will stay with you long after you've turned off the console, whether it's giggling at the one-liners or humming the infectious tunes. A must play.

Paul Taylor





FINAL SAY:



- Very funny and quirky
- Incredibly easy to pick up and play
- =
- Some stages are frustrating to master
- Re-hashed levels from other titles

STICKING POINT

After successfully completing a level, you'll be treated to a graphical vignette either starring the Queen or Robomen. Queenie's cartoons are kinda dull, but Robomen are embroilled in outrageous escapades, usually involving flying around. The best way to describe is they're very, very Japanese. Though there aren't many tentacles.

VERDICT: From the glorious graphics and bubbling soundtrack to witty script, this is joyfullness, digitally realised.





INFO GENRE: RACING

RELEASE: NOW DISTRIBUTOR: AIF **DEVELOPER: SYSTEM 3** PLAYERS: 1-16

PRICE: \$ 99.95









BRING YOUR BROLLY

While SuperCar's sensation of speed isn't as grand as we'd like, it does have excellent rain effects. We flicked our DB9 through the chicanes at Spa while the wet stuff pelted down, and as we accelerated on the straight, water gradually beaded and streaked backwards over the windows. A real highlight.

SUPERCAR CHALLENGE

Just try to bring it back in one piece

rom the opening menu, when the strains of Carmina Burana burst through, you realise that this is a serious game with serious hardware that doesn't want to mess around with frivolities. Although there's an 'arcade' mode, this is a sim through and through. Each of the 44 rides in the stable wear the 'supercar' tag like Mr T wears gold chains, or a Mafioso wears expensive suits:

like a birthright. This is a billionaire's wish list of must-have motors, so it's

THE

WHEEL

DEAL

We drove this almost entirely with

Logitech's Driving Force GT, as playing

with a controller it just felt sterile. However,

the wheel had a few niggles of its own, such

as a slack deadzone and turbulence at high

speeds, and the in-game options didn't

offer enough fine customisation. What

disappointing that the game doesn't do enough to invoke an emotional investment when vou put your foot to the floor.

> It's not through lack of trying, as SuperCar ticks all the boxes. 16 cars

on track, damage modelling, meaty sound effects, plenty of sub challenges; it's a game that, while it does take itself seriously, isn't bereft of character. Tiff Needell, former host of Top Gear, introduces segments and even promises to "guide you round every corner" in the game's much needed tutorial mode that introduces you to a number of cars and tracks. He's doesn't guide you round every corner, rather gently praises you for getting things right or offers slightly obnoxious barbs like, "Oh dear", "Did you remember to bring your insurance details?" and "The track's the grey bit," should you transgress.

These digs when you're struggling don't help, especially as the crippling aspect of the game is that it's just too damn hard. For a number of races you'll just be following the green and red racing line rather than reading the track, trying to stick to it like a train on tracks. Depending on your car you may succeed admirably, or come a cropper on

> Stability and traction control are on maximum by default on two of the three race

> > good idea to turn them down by half (leave ABS alone else you'll spend your time picking bits of your bumper bar out of the walls) as this loosens

the back end and allows you to actually turn in to a corner. You'll be fighting to make it to first place most of the time and it's especially disheartening to see the pack split in to a group of back runners and then first and second place way, way out in front.

WORSE THAN BETTER THAN NEED FOR SPEED SHIFT FERRARI CHALLENGE

What this leads to is immense feelings of frustration. Success in SuperCar is a prerequisite to earning points, points unlock cars, and more cars equal more options to earn points and so on. Sure, there are moments of brilliance, in particular the Riviera track where the barriers zip by as you zig around the corners and fly along the straights, though there's just not enough charm here to keep us engaged, especially when Need For Speed SHIFT shows how to entertain and hook an audience whilst treating them intelligently. & Paul Taylor



A tonne of hot Ferraris and other cars you'll probably never drive

Lots of modes and challenge



 Crippling difficulty So-so graphics

VERDICT: We admire what it's trying to do, but it's been beaten to the checkered flag by EA's new thrill ride





FIFA 10 Celebrating the football thug in all of us

he sports video game is a different beast. Maligned for its stagnant evolution but praised for its reliability, it's the only creature in the great pixelated garden that lives in fear of a peculiar horror – cannibalism. FIFA 10, EA's new worship piece dedicated to the sport of chequered balls, is no exception. No longer concerned with being devoured by Konami's bottom feeder [Oooh, harsh – Ed.], Pro Evolution Soccer (now well below FIFA's chops on the food chain), its biggest predator, the one game that stands in the way of it

dominating all life as we know it is... EA's previous FIFA 09.

PlayStation
PlaySt

upstream EA has listened with three ears to the rants and raves of fans while going about adding – apparently – hundreds of improvement to the on-field play, as well as sewing the seeds of a more personalised online movement.

First, there's the on-field hijinks. Branding the style of play in FIFA 09 still a tad too staged and restrictive, FIFA 10 charges both player and ball with greater sovereignty to produce a wilder, more liberal range of play. Goals, tackles, fouls, dispossessions, repossessions, deflections, jinking runs - all feel more about timing, momentum, and player attributes than aligning themselves with animation routines and flat Al. Thanks to the new 360° dribbling, running the ball feels far less on rails, with beating defenders now less an issue of luck and more about creativity. Jostling for possession seems a lot more responsive, and tackled carriers no longer go into the sort mini trance De Niro did in Awakenings after losing the ball. All up, FIFA 10 grants greater control and plays better football. Fact.

There's also greater reason to play online. The big present under the tree this year is the Virtual Pro feature. Not a prostitution emulator, instead it's about YOU as a sorry piece of football paraphernalia made flesh. Like in Fight



INFO

GENRE: SPORTS
RELEASE: OCTOBER 2009
DISTRIBUTOR: EA
DEVELOPER: EA CANADA
PLAYERS: 1-7 (2-20 ONLINE)
PRICE: \$109.95

Night Round 4, Facebreaker and Tiger Woods, it allows players to map a photo of themselves onto a created player using the EA website (see 'Football Mug').

Once in the game players can hook up with other friends and form their own Virtual Clubs in a bid to play proper 10-on-10 matches with other geezers online. While 10-on-10 was supported last year, trying to tee one up was up there with lancing a haemorrhoid with a safety pin. FIFA 10's Pro Club Championship now formalises things and makes these 10-on-10 games easier to organise. What's particularly snazzy is that it's divided into regions so you don't have to worry about playing a team spread out over the Eastern Bloc with lag straight out of the early '90s.

Continuing to wave the flag amongst their barrage of options, features, and modes, is Live Season 2.0. Or should we write Live \$eason 2.0? Like last year this mode allows players to control their favourite club and revise history as they emulate fixtures, and sync their rosters, yellow cards, and injuries with events from the real season. The downside is that each league costs money to join.

Fortunately FIFA 10 has enough free game modes to get caught in your throat. Provided





olfenstein draws from history – the history of first-person shooters, that is. The guns have no recoil, the levels are constricting, linear man-funnels, and the enemies dutifully pop their heads out from cover at timed intervals. We cannot really blame the designers, for their task was insoluble: to create a fine tribute to the first-ever shooter, and simultaneously dazzle the punters of today.

Wolfenstein may fail to excite, but it doesn't fail to engage, thanks to the most old-school design feature of all: die and restart gameplay.

An early challenge sets the tone. After nicking a supernatural amulet from an ancient temple, you have to escape several Indiana Jones-style death-traps. The trick is to use your new time-slowing power to dodge crushing doors, energy bolts, and ultimately run over a collapsing bridge.

This could easily take you 20 or so attempts. The trick is not to dash over the span immediately, but rather to wait to see how it falls apart, and then take the serpentine path of the pavers that collapse last.

The solution is neither obvious nor logical – even Lex Luthor couldn't deduce it on his first go. Raven must be terribly proud of its loading screens, given how much time you'll spend looking at them.

Once the game has kicked your arse, oh, around 50 times, things start to get interesting.

WORSE THAN BETTER THAN
COD: WORLD AT WAR UBERSOLDIER

the second sight afforded by your occult little gizmo – do make *Wolfenstein* a shooter like no other.

Two key problems with WWII shooters are the brown colour palette and the hassle of walking around. The Veil solves both. A down tap on the D-Pad puts a layer of evil cellophane

over your vision, where all the Nazis glow green, and key destructible weak points glow red. Shoot the globby ghosts visible in this mode and they'll chain lightning into nearby Nazis. You move faster, too. With the Mire power turned on, you can dash up and neutralise a machine gun nest before they can even get a bead on you.

The Veil is a novel twist, and fun to use. The catch is that some of the Nazis have Veil powers too. This makes even the most tyrannical pipsqueak of a mini-boss a right royal pain. You must study their movements and use the right powers to counter if you wish to avoid that dreaded loading screen.

Novelty and genius are not the same thing, and after a weekend with Wolfenstein you will most likely have seen enough. It's fun, corny action, but it's not a keeper.

James Cottee

FINAL SAY:



- Solid run-and-gun urban WWII tactics
- Novel weapons and occult powers



 Graphics and textures a little dated
 Frustrating die-and-restart challenges

VERDICT: Lacks soul, but still delivers Naziblasting action. Just try before you buy.

Clay pigeon shooting was rubbish in the dark

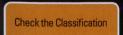




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PLAYSTATION 3



'70s grindhouse awesome, or damp squib?

t's been a long while since we've encountered a game packing as much attitude as this little ripper. This is a living, seething tribute to all things badass that would put Tarantino to shame.

Written by Duppy Demetrius of 24 fame, WET comes packaged as a movie in the old school '70s grindhouse fashion, a genre where the violent solution is the only solution.

At its heart, this is a classic revenge tale, packed with murder.

> intrigue, dudes with silly names (Rat Boy.

Tarantula, etc.) and cold-hearted English superbaddies who will stop at nothing to achieve their nefarious goals.

At the centre of this dangerous world is our protagonist, Rubi Malone. A gun - or more accurately six guns and a Katana - for hire, Rubi gets drawn into the world of William Ackers, thanks in no small part to a mysterious briefcase and a wayward son.

The opening scene sees Rubi hunting the current owner of the case, a thieving no-good sucker by the name of Simmons. Realising he's being chased, Simmons releases his well-tooled hounds in a desperate attempt to dodge a bullet. Cue lots and lots of gunfights, a madcap car chase, a bucket load of sassy dialogue, heaps of excellent music and the old Zippo in a pool of gasoline trick.

For all her attitude and undeniable gun skills Rubi is nothing without her "Acrobatic Slow-Mo" - or "Bullet Time" as us old-timers call it. While the effect is nothing new it's rarely been used to such compelling effect. Pulling off sweet wall runs or school disco-style knee slides don't trigger it by themselves, but get those pistols blazing and the slow-mo kicks in, allowing Rubi to unleash some righteous justice on the bad guys. Once active, slow-mo sees Rubi auto-aim at the nearest/ most convenient troublemaker, leaving it up to you to "split aim" with the second pistol. Aiming at the same target obviously makes for a quicker kill, but aiming at someone else entirely is a sure fire way to rack up the all important

The lions share of style points come

style points.

from the Arena rounds. Sprung with little or no warning, these closed-off sections are among the most challenging in the game, particularly in later levels. The concept is simple enough; Rubi has to take out the opposition while disabling the spawn doors to prevent further waves of enemies entering the fray. Bonus multiplier power-ups dot the level to help maximise the style points and - most importantly - increase the health regeneration rate.

A succession of kills also builds the score multiplier, increasing the style points per kill. At the end of each stage or arena these points can be spent on upgrades ranging from increased health to new moves such as the 'rising slash' which lets Rubi hack at enemies with her Katana as she busts a knee slide.

As the majority of fights take place in slow-mo these upgrades are essential in keeping the combat fresh. It's a little surprising, then, that there are so few new moves to unlock. Other than a couple of new tricks the emphasis seems to be on upgrading the weapons, making them do more damage faster, or increasing their ammo capacity. Failing to include more special moves, particularly combo-chaining attacks feels like a missed

Our main gripe is the approach to death. Rubi will die. Frequently. Death is greeted by a projector malfunction and the disconcerting sight of celluloid melting. At first it feels like a nice touch, but after meeting it repeatedly on a difficult section, and having to endure the loading screen that follows it, it becomes increasingly frustrating. What makes it worse is that falling into water doesn't 'kill' Rubi and trigger the reload but sends her back to the last



checkpoint. Why couldn't all deaths be treated like this, or at the very least offer a 'panic button' as per Batman: Arkham Asylum to prevent another irritating loading screen.

While the camera behaves itself for the most part, the time it causes mischief will be just as you're about to make a death-defying leap across a chasm of some sort. The slight shift in camera as Rubi makes a leap is invariably enough to see her miss the ladder/ pipe/whatever and send her plummeting to her doom. Death by human error is challenging, death by wonky camera is plain frustrating.

The linear levels can be a little samey, but given the cinematic ambitions a branching story wouldn't make a whole lot of sense. Challenge modes, either at Rubi's secret training grounds or high-score runs through beaten stages provide some respite, but aside from the arenas and standard run and gun levels the only things to break the monotony in Story Mode are the Rage levels and the odd car chase.

These chase sequences are a real mixed bag. The action is undeniably well done, with Rubi pinging off trucks and gloriously taking down chumps on motorcycles. Not so awesome are the 'Quick Time' button mashes that pop up in the thick of the action, making them easy to miss. Again, it's difficult to decide if this is part of the challenge or just brainachingly frustrating.

Redemption is at hand, however, with the appropriately named 'Rage Mode'. Every so often Rubi will shoot some fool in the face at

close range, splattering her face with hot, wet blood. Accompanied by a hectic '70s alarm sound and some retro close-ups of her angry face Rage Mode is thus triggered, unleashing some of the most stylish action we've ever seen: a manic crossbreed of MadWorld, a punk gig and an iPod advert where you get to cut those self-righteous iPod dudes to hell and back - it has a certain charm. These gorgeous levels are geared to building the longest possible chain of kills and, if the camera plays nicely, it's possible to chain your way from the



66 Atmosphere is top notch, and the game **bristles with** a raw energy "

first enemy to the last. Which is nice.

WET wears its inspirations on its sleeve and this is both its greatest strength and greatest weakness. The atmosphere is top notch, and the game bristles with a raw energy that is a joy to behold. The art direction is excellent, particularly in Rage Mode, and the soundtrack is one of the best we've heard. It's unfortunate the gameplay can be a little repetitive and dying is just plain annoying.

As a tribute to the grindhouse genre WET is nigh on unbeatable. As a game it's certainly not perfect, but on this rare occasion style edges out substance. & Alan Moore



- · Brilliant atmosphere and attitude
- Excellent soundtrack
- · Well realised 'bullet time'



- Repetitive gameplay
- Some extremely frustrating sections

VERDICT: A good oldfashioned case of style over substance, but with so much style who needs substance?



TERMISSION

On the screen



aul Giamatti plays himself in this comedy that was originally imagined for Woody Allen.

Amen that Allen didn't get a look-in after director Barthes saw Giamatti in American Splendour, as Giamatti and the rest of the cast are a joy to watch and make this an un-indulgent flick.

Cold Souls is essentially an existential film, though don't let that put you off. Giamatti is struggling with his role in a production of Chekhov's

'Uncle Vanya', and discovers a company who specialise in 'soul storage'; they extract souls to provide relief to people, and can even implant new ones. Giamatti's, however, turns out to resemble a chick pea. What follows involves Russian mules that transport souls between Russia and the States, and questions about the nature of what it is that makes us who we are.

It has shades of Eternal Sunshine

of the Spotless Mind, and even a touch of Being John Malkovich though it's infinitely less confusing than either of those two films. Giamatti and Korzun, the Russian soul mule, are the driving force here though, the whole cast are immensely enjoyable to watch – much needed as the pace is fairly slow until the final third of the movie.

If you've never dabbled in 'lite' philosophy you should still get a kick out of this.

ALSO IN CINEMAS...

Paper Heart (M)

Director: Nick Jasenovec

Cast: Nick Jasenovec Charlyne Yi, Michael Cera

A mock documentary that's really a comedy, about Yi and her quest to find out about love. You might have seen her in Knocked Up, and her co-star in that indie flick Juno and Superbad. Yi decides to make a documentary about love since she feels that she could never experience it and thus interviews a bunch of people about their experience. On her travels she meets Cera, her real-life boyfriend, and together they make this film very, very funny. Check it out.

Funny People (MA15+)

Director: Judd Apatow **Cast:** Adam Sandler, Seth Rogen, Eric Ban

Fans of Apatow's work (The 40-Year-Old Virgin and Knocked Up) will find a lot to like here with a tonne of credible comedians who play a role in the life of stand up comic George Simmons (Sandler) who has been diagnosed with a terminal illness. Apatow and Sandler used to live together, and footage used in Funny People is from their time as flatmates. This bond that they share makes this a tight movie, and Rogen is impressive, though the production gets a bit thin in the last half hour or so of its 146 minutes.

THE BUZZ What's really going on behind-the-scenes

We didn't see it coming. The Walt Disney Company has bought Marvel Entertainment for \$US4 billion, meaning that several thousand comic book characters will share the home as Mickey Mouse. For gamers, this means that several franchises (including those

from Sega and Activision) have an uncertain fate.

It's an interesting combination, though the two companies' business models are closely mirrored. Disney relies on its wholesome non-violent image, where as Marvel characters are thoroughly content to lay the smack down. Both companies, however, enthusiastically promote use properties through a variety of medium.

Disney's next step must surely be to snatch DC for WB for a Batman vs. The Punisher vs. Mickey showdown.





ANGELS & **DEMONS (M)**

Director: Ron Howard Cast: Tom Hanks, Ewan McGregor, Ayelet Zurer, Stellan Skarsgard, Pierfrancesco Favino

In Ron Howard's follow-up to the loveit-or-hate-it blockbuster hit The Da Vinci Code, expert symbologist Robert Langdon (Tom Hanks) follows a series of ancient clues on a hunt through Rome to find four Cardinals kidnapped by the deadly secret society, the Illuminati, With the Cardinals' lives on the line, and the Camerlengo (Ewan McGregor) desperate for help, Langdon embarks on a nonstop, action-packed race through sealed crypts, dangerous catacombs, and the most secretive vault on Earth. It's actually a bit mediocre, even compared to the last one.

LAND OF THE LOST (M)

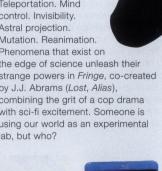
Director: Brad Silberling Cast: Will Ferrell, Anna Friel, Danny McBride, Jorma Taccone, John Boylan, Matt Lauer, Leonard Nimoy

Will Ferrell stars has-been scientist Dr. Rick Marshall, sucked back through time into a world of dinosaurs and crazy creatures with no weapons and no clue what to do. With research assistant Holly and a redneck survivalist named Will, Rick must rely on an odd primate called Chaka to help them escape this barmy dimension. As usual, Will Ferrell tries hard to make the whole thing work, although he doesn't quite pull it off. The film itself, only loosely based on the TV series it's inspired by, is arguably a little too shady for young kids, but it's certainly not doing enough to keep the rest of us entertained.

FRINGE - THE COMPLETE

Director: Toby Wilkins Cast: Charles Baker, Jill Wagner, Paul Costanzo, Shea Whigham

Teleportation, Mind control. Invisibility. Astral projection. Mutation, Reanimation. Phenomena that exist on the edge of science unleash their strange powers in Fringe, co-created by J.J. Abrams (Lost, Alias), combining the grit of a cop drama with sci-fi excitement. Someone is using our world as an experimental lab. but who?





EXTRAS: 4



EXTRAS: 6





X-Men Goes without saying, really...

EXTRAS: 5

VERDICT: A serviceable thriller. Silly,

VERDICT: Not as kid-friendly as it

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INTERMISSION

On the box



NICK & **NORAH'S** INFINITE PLAYLIST (M)

Director: Peter Sollett Cast: Michael Cera, Kat Dennings, Eddie Kaye Thomas, John Cho

Nick & Norah's Infinite Playlist is a coming-of-age teen comedy film based upon the novel of the same name by Rachel Cohn and David Levithan. Although Nick and Norah have nothing in common except for their taste in music, a chance encounter between the two leads them on an all-night quest to find a legendary band's secret gig, but ends up becoming the first date in a romance that could change their lives. Great chemistry gives this little movie a lot of charm, even if it's a bit predicatable.

OBSERVE REPORT (MA15+)

Director: Jody Hill Cast: Seth Rogen, Ray Liotta, Anna Faris

When a flasher begins terrorising shoppers at Forest Ridge Mall, mall cop Ronnie seizes the opportunity to showcase his detective skills and impress gorgeous makeup counter girl Brandi. Perhaps by catching the culprit, Ronnie will finally earn his way into the police academy. Unfortunately, Ronnie hadn't counted on competition from Detective Harrison of the Conway Police. Each makes it his personal mission to nab the flasher before the other. It's kind of like a dumb Taxi Driver.

STAR TREK

Director: J.J. Abrams Cast: Chris Pine, Zachary Quinto, Leonard Nimoy, Eric Bana, Bruce Greenwood, Karl Urban, Zoe Saldana, Simon Pegg, John Cho, Anton Yelchin, Ben Cross, Winona Ryder, Chris Hemsworth

After surviving a Romulan attack as an infant, a young James T. Kirk is encouraged to join Starfleet, giving him the opportunity to meet Spock (Zachary Quinto), Uhura (Zoe Saldana), and the rest of the characters Trekkies have loved for decades. Star Trek has acheived the impossible by pleasing hardcore fans with plenty of in-jokes and references (and an appearance by the original Spock, Leonard Nimoy), but it never alienates newcomers with an avalache of assumed knowledge. Brilliant stuff.



EXTRAS: 8

VERDICT: Heartfelt, and with a great soundtrack.





EXTRAS: 5



EXTRAS: 7

VERDICT: Hugely enjoyable, a fantastic reboot.

IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY... Role Models Paul Rudd at his

best!



WEIRD SCIENCE

Warner Home Video is celebrating the release of new series *Fringe: The Complete First Season* on Blu-ray, available September 30! From the J.J. Abrams, creator of *Lost*, comes this thrilling critically acclaimed series starring Joshua Jackson (Dawson's Creek) and Australia's own Anna Torv and John Noble. This supersized Blu-ray edition contains all 20 episodes from the first season, plus six hours of bonus feature, which makes it a must for any sci-fi fan! Thanks to Warner Bros. we have 18 of these to give away. For a shot at winning one, simply answer the following question and follow the entry instructions on page 25.

Question: In 25 words or less, what paranormal activity would scare you most and why?





FRINGE:
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IL-2 Sturmovik demo



One of the greatest flight sims available has a two-level demo available. Over one million gamers have nabbed this already

F.E.A.R. 2 REBORN demo



A single-player excursion in to the four-player pack. Especially pleasing as a level-pack is normally a stab in the scary dark.

FNR4 Content Pack 1 DLC



A freebie which packs in gloves, trunks, enhanced gameplay sliders as well as a new training gym. The best just got better.

Batman: AA



Another freebie, this one gives you the access to The Joker and a repertoire of his tricks and gadgets in the madhouse.

Castlevania: LoS trailer



The extended gamescom trailer can be summed up as 'epic'. The glossy production values justify its mammoth 617MB girth.

NEWS

CLASSICS

What was old is new again

he ESRB, America's electronic entertainment regulating body which is the equivalent of the OFLC, has rated a number of PSone games for the PlayStation Store. Titles include:

- Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain
- Cool Boarders 3
- International Track & Field
- Oddworld: Abe's Exodus
- Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee
- Pandemonium!
- Syphon Filter 2
- Um Jammer Lammy

Though we'd love to download these for our PSP, there aren't any plans from Sony Europe or Australia to put these up on our local PlayStation Store. Yet.





GUITAR HERO5

e're noticing a trend: as new games come out, DLC is announced to coincide with their release. *GH5* is no different. Four of The Rolling Stones' songs will feature; 'Prodigal Son,' 'You Gotta Move,' 'Under My Thumb,' 'I'm Free,' and '(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction,' as well a swag bag of other content. Here's the skinny:



Street Sweeper Social Club

- '100 Little Curses'
- 'Fight! Smash! Win!'
- 'Somewhere in the World It's Midnight'

AFI

- 'Beautiful Thieves'
- 'Girl's Not Grey'
- 'The Missing Frame'

Editors

• 'Munich'

The Faint

• 'Geeks Were Right'

Yeah Yeah Yeahs

• 'Dull Life'



ONLINE REVIEWS

KILLZONE 2: MAP PACK ROUND UP! YEEE-HAH!

fter the excellent Steel and Titanium map pack we figured things would cool off on the DLC front for Killzone 2. We were wrong. Delightfully wrong. The second map pack Flash and Thunder featured updated old school Killzone maps (so the first game was good for something after all).

We were about to review that pack then BAM! Along came Napalm and Cordite - the third map pack!

Now all three packs come in a bundle for \$19.95. If you're still playing Killzone 2 online these should not be missed.

We'll tell you why...

FLASH AND THUNDER



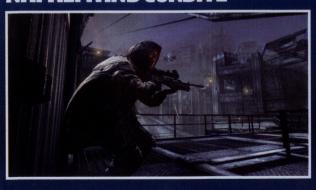
Beach Head

A favourite at the office, the beach head is retro in more ways than one. Yes it's an improved favourite from the original Killzone but due to its muddy expanse, rain-filled trenches and soggy terrain there's a WWII meets future warfare vibe going on. Vast, gritty and full of peril, Beach Head is one of the game's best maps - especially for Body Count and Search and Destroy. We recommend equipping a sniper rifle and finding a perch at the ISA base.

Southern Hills

The lesser map of the pack, Southern Hills is still a dandy locale for killin'. It looks a bit plain at first - with a curious number of shacks around the place but you'll soon be dashing for them as intermittent nuclear explosions occur. If you're not inside you're ash, baby. This makes longer games problematic and you'll need to time your hero runs with greater precision. There's nothing worse then getting a bead on your enemy and being vaporised before you can put lead in their head.

NAPALM AND CORDITE



Arctower Landing

Set in the electric environs of Arctowers spewing energy into the sky, this map has numerous tunnels under the large surface area making it a map you'll have to play a lot to get familiar with. There's also the addition of the Boltgun which - if used correctly - can give your kill count a nice jolt upwards. This is one of those rare maps that's great for every game type (except maybe Assassination, as there are few places you can hide for any significant amount of time). Prepare to die/kill a lot as - due to the free flowing nature of the environments - you and your enemies will always be on the move. Outstanding.

Suljeva Cliffside

A dusty, desert setting seems the perfect place for the addition of the flamethrower, and as it's on the side of a huge cliff face it does become very narrow in parts. This means the flamethrower is extremely effective, spraying fire like a deadly garden hose in the bottlenecks. Keep your distance: the flames can very easily be turned back onto you.

KZ2 DLC appears to be over for the time being so if you haven't purchased it already, nab the bundle for \$19.95. You can thank us later. Anthony O'Connor

Gaming, trailers, downloads, friends...



ONLINE REVIEWS

MARVEL VS. CAPCOM 2

The best threesome vou'll ever have



ou'd be forgiven for thinking that the fighting market is comfortably catered for by SFIV, Tekken 6 and Soulcalibur. Not so. What MvC2 brings is a fast paced, easy to pick up title with oodles of content and possibilities. There's something in here for everyone.

The selling point of Capcom's three-onthree brawler is its massive 56-strong roster featuring some well-known favourites and obscure characters, both from Capcom's own series of games and also from the Marvel universe: Ryu, Ken, Anakaris and Jill Valentine sit alongside Wolverine, Iron Man, Spidey and Silver Samurai. It's an intimidating line-up on the character select screen, and simultaneously (paradoxically) pleasing and disappointing. There's nothing to unlock: all the costumes, stages and fighters from the Dreamcast original are available, ready to go.

Visually and aurally, the game hasn't changed much. Backgrounds are highly colourful 3D affairs and the overall presentation is a mix of Year 6 PowerPoint class and Saturday morning cartoons. The fighters themselves are adequately animated but, despite the wide screen support, have escaped the treatment afforded to SSFIIHD Remix. What makes it though is the mechanics.

Super jumps, air combos, Turbo, Turbo 2, assists, tags, all-in supers where the screen lights up like New Year's Eve. Capcom trimmed the usual light, medium

☑ INFO

GENRE: FIGHTING RELEASE: NOW **DISTRIBUTOR: THO** DEVELOPER: CAPCOM PLAYERS: 1-2 PRICE: \$23.95



and heavy button structure to just light and heavy, so the face buttons accomplish the main attacks perfectly. Assists - calling in a team-mate for a quick attack - are on n and n while swapping is as easy as pressing both light or both heavy attacks. Your health partially heals when you swap out, so despite the colour and mayhem it's still tactical: if you thought SFIV was too much like playing chess then this is for you.

Since all characters are selectable, the focus is on multiplayer. Online's broken up in to ranked and unranked matches, and it works well for the most part. Annoyingly, you could land in a six player room, where two players battle it our and you're left as a spectator. While this is fine if you've organised a party, if you're last in the room you'll have to wait a few minutes until it's your turn. Our advice? Create your own match and set the maximum players to '2' if you're fighting all comers. Despite this, finding a match shouldn't be a problem.

Even those with slow connections will be well served, though be prepared to bring your game. At time of writing, there are ranked players who have won hundreds of games and not succumbed once.

Fans should have this already, and those of you who missed out the first time will find delight here. We'll see you online. **♣** Paul Taylor



WORSE THAN BETTER THAN NOT HAVING IT SSIIHD REMIX









WOLVERINE AND WOLVERINE

FINAL SAY:



- Thousands of fighter combinations
- Deep but frantic combat
- Default music will grate Single player needs something

VERDICT: Bright, glorious and slightly mental, this is a classic brought to the masses Something in here for everyone



WIN PREMIERSHIP GLORY



*Available now at participating retailers.
While stocks last. See au.playstation.com for more details.

pspinyourhands.com





INSIGHT

Tips and cheats

10 THINGS TO DO IN...

BATMAN: ARKHAM ASYLUM

ost hardcore Bat-fans and gamers alike have found their way into Batman:

Arkham Asylum and as amazing as the experience is, while it lasts, the lack of decent boss fights does hurt it somewhat.

However, now we've had a chance to play as The Joker in the Challenge Rooms we've found, appropriately enough, them insanely

hard but extremely enjoyable and that they add an extra dimension to the game. Quite why they'd give Joker so many cool fighting attributes and gadgets and then make him a lame, weak boss in the game proper is beyond us, but there you go.

In honour of his green-haired ghoulishness we've split the list into five things to do as Batman and five to do as the Joker.



1 TAKE A CLOSER LOOK

Check out these odd little things we've found around the place. Sure it's pointless, but why did the programmers puts so much into it? Once you start noticing these you'll start finding all sorts of cool stuff.



6 GAS ATTACK!

Batman has his cape to bewilder foes, Joker has his gas. His laughing gas. Press and he spins around, making foes stagger and giggle involuntarily. Can we get away with saying it's so funny, it's a gas? No?



2 STRIKE A POSE

What's a super hero without an awesome super hero pose? It's incredibly geeky, but *Batman: AA* is full of posing opportunities. So set yourself up, sit back and geek out. Yeah, baby, you're the goddamn Batman.



7 OH YEAH, I HAVE A GUN!

in the Joker Challenge rooms you can shoot off a bullet in every round of combat and once in the stealth sections. Still the bullet is so damn powerful you can get two-fer kills! Surely powerful enough to cap a Bat?



3SET THE PERFECT TRAP

Much has been said about the awesome combat in *Batman*, and it's true. But there's something to be said for setting the perfect trap. Explosive gel on wall, meet goon. Goon, meet explosive gel on wall. BAM!



8 FIGHTIN' DIRTY!

Joker's finishing moves are a hoot. He can smack heads into the ground, send a swift boot to the ballsack (followed by an insane giggle) and even dance on a downed foe. Almost as scary as Riverdance. Almost.



4 FINISH HIM!

There's nothing quite like the slow motion finishing moves. This is a dandy kick but you can also break arms, sweep legs and shoot an elbow to the head. Beating up goons is fun, and as a vigilante it's totally legal.



9 EAT MY TEETH

In the stealth challenge rooms Joker has some explosive chattering teeth which can follow foes and detonate on contact. You can also choose time of detonation and again get a two-fer kill. Love that Joker!



5 HEAD-HUNTER

Yo, Arkham, Charles Manson called, he wants his stuff back. This was pretty much the grisliest trophy we could find. What the hell is it doing just lying around? Who knows – but damn this game is dark and creepy!



10 DEFECTIVE MODE

Once more in Joker's stealth challenge rooms, our green-haired nut job can don X-Ray glasses and plan his next attack. Unfortunately he can't move when he does this making the challenge that much greater.

BLOCKBUSTER®

Your Destination For Entertainment!



Movie







BLOCKBUSTE

All the games that matter on PS3!

WANTED

My precious...



CREED II

Altaïr? Bah, yesterday's news! He's been banished to the past as we zip forward to Renaissance period Italy and become a noblemancum-assassin named Ezio - a protagonist who can actually swim. Yep, water isn't a problem for this dude, be it the canals of Venice, or his bath tub. If they had bath tubs then.



MAFIA II

First announced back in 2007, this sequel to the brilliant PS2 third-person shooter is set to jump forward to the 1940s and '50s. in a fictional city that's

a melange of San Francisco and NYC. Promising 10 square miles of sandbox for us to stomp about in, we're hoping it'll be an offer far too



miles removed from PS2 delight Ico, Game Republic's Majin sees a young thief pair with a rather large and grassy-looking monster. An open-world fantasy, hitherto unexperienced levels of Al are promised as player and monster work to solve puzzle



METRO 2033: REFUGE

Generally speaking Russian cult novels aren't your usual fodder for games inspiration, so we're keen to get our hands on this action-infused post-

apocalyptic survival horror shooter that has the air of colliding Fallout and BioShock with a butt-load of vodka and mutants.



ROGUE WARRIOR

Another book-to-game deal, Richard Marcinko's words come to pixels along with the man himself, as he becomes a US Navy SEAL trapped behind enemy lines in the land

of Kim Jong II. It's back up on the radar, complete with the leather-faced and gravel-toned Mickey Rourke providing the speech for Marcinko.

THEY

England, 2012. You think the terrorism has gotten out of hand? Well just wait until you get a load of the alien-masterminded robot invasion! As you may have guessed, we're talking

shooter here, although one cool feature promised is a weapons system that's tuneable on the fly. This is another straggler that's apparently now close to fully cooked.

SIMPLY THE BEST.

The best of the best of the best of the best



GRAND THEFT AUTO IV

"GTAIV is a game 10 out of 10 was designed for - a game that takes your rising, constantly spiralling expectations and vapourises them with a product so sublime you'll tell your grandkids about it."

DEVELOPER: Rockstar North PUBLISHER: Rockstar PLAYERS: 1-16





UNCHARTED: DRAKE'S FORTUNE

"The only bad thing about it is it ends, but hot damn it takes you on a transcendentally enjoyable ride. There's no reason why you shouldn't buy this game."

DEVELOPER: Naughty Dog **PUBLISHER:** Sony PLAYERS: 1



RED FACTION GUERRILLA

"Turning destruction in to an art form, Red Faction

Guerrilla is a sandbox experience of the the highest calibre. A credible physics package creates loads of 'must see' moments, making this a game you didn't even know you wanted.'

DEVELOPER: Volition PUBLISHER: THQ PLAYERS: 1-16



MGS4: GUNS OF THE **PATRIOTS**

"An incredibly layered

gaming experience that is almost inexhaustible. One of the best games available on the PlayStation 3, and definitely one of the top exclusives. Buy and play this videogame now."

DEVELOPER: Kojima Productions PUBLISHER: Atari
PLAYERS: 1-16



INFAMOUS

LITTLE

with physics and an accessible level

postmodern - a game that everyone

creator, LittleBigPlanet becomes

something delightfully simple and

can play, and endlessly recreate."

DEVELOPER: Media Molecule

PUBLISHER: Sony

PLAYERS: 1-4

BIGPLANET

"By rejigging the

traditional platformer

the game mechanics, the story, presentation,

music and interface all conspire to play silly buggers with your perceptions of what video gaming is all about. Good for at least two playthroughs, the choice to use your superpowers for good or evil is, literally, in your hands."



"The city you explore,



DEAD SPACE

"The best survival horror title this generation - by an absolute country mile

Dead Space combines a smart story with incredible visuals, sound design to create what is arguably the scariest video game ever made. A must-play on every possible level."

DEVELOPER: Visceral Games PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1





FALLOUT 3

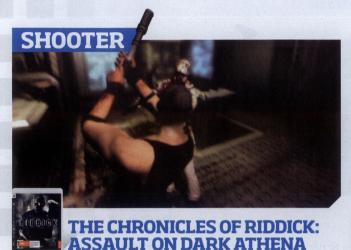
"Taking the solid base of Oblivion and placing into a post apocalyptic

wasteland always sounded like a great idea - and Fallout 3 proves that concept brilliantly. This is a game that will astound you with the sheer depth and enormity of it's incredible vision.

DEVELOPER: Sucker Punch PUBLISHER: Sony PLAYERS: 1



DEVELOPER: Bethesda **PUBLISHER:** Atari



"Worth your sweat. The combination of two campaigns equals a respectable 20+ hours of gameplay. A must for those wanting something moody and fresh."

DEVELOPER: Starbreeze Studios PUBLISHER: Atari PLAYERS: 1-12



KILLZONE 2

"Visually Killzone 2 runs through the competition like a bull in the

proverbial china shop. Lucky then, that the game's design and story matches the lofty production values. Killzone 2 is the first-person shooter evolved."

DEVELOPER: Guerrilla PUBLISHER: Sony PLAYERS: 1-16

DEVELOPER: 2K Marin PLAYERS: 1



BIOSHOCK

"As a sub-par port,

disappointment. BUT you'd be silly to

miss out on what is undoubtedly one of

so far. In many ways, this is a must play."

the landmark games of this generation

minus the promised extra

content, BioShock is a



"A fantastic shooter with a dizzying array of combat scenarios and packed with bleeding-edge military hardware. COD4 is one of the tightest shooters we've ever played."

DEVELOPER: Infinity Ward **PUBLISHER:** Activision **PLAYERS:** 1-16

MODERN WARFARE



WARHAWK

"Tighter than a bull's arse on fight night and smoother than a glass

of Guinness, Warhawk is a seriously superior piece of software. Multiplayer only, but you'd be barking mad to miss it."

DEVELOPER: Incognito **PUBLISHER:** Sony PLAYERS: 1-32





THE ORANGE BOX

"The Orange Box is ripe, in season, and packed

with vitamin value. With five quality titles, including the sublime Portal, there truly is something here for everybody. An unmissable package."

DEVELOPER: Valve PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-16





CALL OF DUTY: WORLD AT WAR

Superior in many ways to even Modern Warfare, this

is a surprisingly superlative piece of software. Powerful, well-produced, stuffed with violence - it's fantastic. The action is relentless, the visuals buttery-smooth, the intensity savage - we love it."

DEVELOPER: Treyarch PUBLISHER: Activision PLAYERS: 1-16



GHOST-BUSTERS

"Well-honed and accessible controls, some

spectacular visual effects, excellent pace, great level design, incredible attention to detail - all of these essential traits combined with the Ghostbusters universe and come together for a thoroughly addictive experience."

DEVELOPER: Terminal Reality PLAYERS: 1-4





FAR CRY 2

"At times overstretching itself, Far Cry 2's breath taking ambition can

often be its undoing, but it's still one of the best shooters out there. Plus. setting stuff on fire is still a ridiculous amount of fun."

DEVELOPER: Ubisoft Montreal **PUBLISHER:** Ubisoft **PLAYERS:** 1-16

TOP 5

OVER-THE-TOP CONTROLLERS



ION DRUM ROCKER

you plump for Rock Band or Guitar Hero drums, they can be a bit crap. This is basically a real electronic kit for gaming. Overkill? Hell yeah - rock 'n' roll!



LOGITECH WIRELESS GUITAR CONTROLLER

Take your pretend shredding seriously? Well, if you take it \$399 worth of seriously, then this slice of absolute awesome is just the ticket – it's a real guitar with RB/GH guts!



LOGITECH DRIVING FORCE GT

If you really, really dig your racing games, \$299 is a steal for one of these puppies, with full-on force feedback, full lock-to-lock and more knobs than a young Libs convention.



SFIV FIGHT STICK

As arcade perfect as it gets without taking a chainsaw to an actual SFIV cabinet, this ain't cheap to buy, but it ain't cheaply made either, as it uses the same components.



DJ HERO RENEGADE **EDITION**

If you're itchin' to get scritchin', but want to rise above the rabble, then this blinged-up plastic turntable will help you go the haughty wicky-wicky - for a \$100 or so premium.

All the games that matter on PS3!

MAGIC **MOMENTS**



GAME: Burnout Paradise CONSOLE: PS3 **YEAR: 2008**

THE MOMENT:

Anybody who's ever ventured online for a spot of gaming will know the score. For every yin-like worthy adversary or co-conspirator you may come across, there will be a yang-like dick fritter who's just out to ruin everybody else's attempts at having fun.

It was with this less than pleasant thought that we approached the pointy end of the trophy list in the extremely splendid *Burnout Paradis*All the offline stuff had been the coolest fun, and online with mates had been an absolute blast. But there was that sense of foreboding dangling over our heads like a string of drool about to let go of the yokel's jaw before "SPLOT!" – we we're going to have to depend on the

kindness of strangers.
Anybody who's spent some time Anybody who's spent some time with BP will likely have guessed why. Yep, it's the remarkably just-the-facts-ma'am titled "8 Players meet in the Wildcats' Baseball Stadium" trophy. Now the challenge: coordinate a couple of mates and a bunch of strangers to help somebody else (in this case us, natch) achieve

something – a rather desirable shiny pixelated platinum thing. It didn't start well. One guy who blessed us with being miked up didn't say anything, just continuously hacked up various internal body parts from within what we can only imagine was an opaque dope miasma. Others were incomprehensible, although we can't have a dig as they were obviously speaking in a tongue that we're too mono-linguistic to decipher. However, despite such challenges we amassed a troop of eight Burnouters who had risen above the primordial ooze. Yes, a convoy of coloured dots snaked its way to the south east of Paradise City and met up in the baseball stadium. We heard that satisfying 'per-ring!' from the little dude living in our PS3 that doles out Trophies. Perhaps even better than achieving that Platinum Trophy, however, was being reminded that not everybody in the magical world of

online is a braindead twat.

Oh all right, not better than the Trophy, but still damned ace





"Pure shot straight from nowhere to rub MotorStorm's face in its glorious graphics and watertight gameplay. It's not as varied as its main competitor, but damn does it play well."

DEVELOPER: Black Rock **PUBLISHER:** Funtastic **PLAYERS:** 1-16



SEGA RALLY

"To appreciate Sega

9

Rally you'll have to continually remind

yourself that it's a deceptively life-

like caricature of a hardcore rallying

experience. Not brain surgery, but it

delivers the fun in big muddy spades."



GRAN TURISMO 5: **PROLOGUE**

'An anemic game package that somehow survives by being what is quite possibly the greatest example of audio-visual excellence on the PlayStation 3 thus far. Well worth checking out."

DEVELOPER: Polyphony Digital PUBLISHER: Sony PLAYERS: 1-16







COLIN MCRAE: DIRT

"DIRT 2 is snazzy, but it's too boneheaded

for its own good, has few real rally cars and very little proper rallying. The original DIRT remains a far better example of a next gen rally game. More varied and far less US-centric."

DEVELOPER: Codemasters PLAYERS: 1-16



RACE DRIVER GRID

"This bastard rock n' roll son of V8 Supercars and

Colin McRae: DiRT is hot. Your lower jaw will relax. Your eyelids will take five. And you'll start to drool. Shame it ditched its roots though, and the V8 DLC Codies promised has vanished."



FERRARI CHALLENGE

Ferrari Challenge will surprise you by being

that little bit better than you thought it could ever be. A hardcore racing sim that thrives on the details, this is a suitable title to fend off the petrol heads until Gran Turismo 5 arrives to rewrite the racing handbook."

DEVELOPER: System 3 **PUBLISHER:** Red Ant PLAYERS: 1-16



MOTORSTORM

"In our humble opinion MotorStorm was the best launch title on the

fledgling PS3 - and arguably it's one of the greatest launch titles of all time. Defining next-gen racing as a platform upon which smart Al and terrain deformation could thrive. MotorStorm reinvented the arcade racer.'

DEVELOPER: Evolution Studios **PUBLISHER:** Sony PLAYERS: 1-16





MIDNIGHT **CLUB: LOS ANGELES**

"Within its niche sub-

genre, MC: LA reigns supreme. Well designed, rolling objectives, and an insane amount of customisation, MC: LA manages to rise above the rabble, easily beating off Need for Speed Undercover at its own game."

DEVELOPER: Rockstar San Diego PUBLISHER: Rockstar



BURNOUT PARADISE

"You'll lament the thoughtless removal

of splitscreen and the lack of a retry button, but you'll marvel at the slick frame rate, the sun drenched city, and Criterion's stellar commitment to free downloadable content. Awesome.

DEVELOPER: Criterion PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-16



DEVELOPER: Codemasters PUBLISHER: Atari PLAYERS: 1-12



"A triumph. Harmonix has found the formula for a truly great music game - immaculate presentation, great tunes and a job for as many of your friends as possible. You wanted the best, you got the best.'

FIGHT NIGHT **ROUND 4**

> "A spectacular game. Deeper and more

technical, Fight Night Round 4 recreates the sweet science more faithfully than ever before. Remarkable detail, incredible animation."

DEVELOPER: FA Canada PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-2



DEVELOPER: Harmonix **PUBLISHER:** EA **PLAYERS:** 1-4



TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 09

"Golf, for most of the populace, is about as

exciting as watching paint dry in an old folk's home, so it's testament to EA that this game actually works well."

DEVELOPER: EA PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-16





SKATE 2

"Despite some frame rate issues, SKATE 2 is undoubtedly one

of the greatest sports game's ever conceived. The controls are flawless, the city is dense, the balance is sublime. Massively addictive."

DEVELOPER: EA Black Box **PUBLISHER: EA** PLAYERS: 1-8





FIFA 09

"With its new momentum physics, stellar visuals, and

engaging gameplay, 2009 is finally the year that the FIFA franchise manages to leap the perennial hurdle that is Pro Evolution Soccer. Now Konami have to play catch up."

DEVELOPER: EA Canada PUBLISHER: EA PLAYERS: 1-20



should check this out."

DISTRIBUTOR: 2K

PLAYERS: 1-10

GUITAR HERO METALLICA

"Guitar Hero Metallica improves upon GHWT in

a number ways - a more user-friendly HUD, superior presentation and more attention to detail. Great tracklist too, including 'Tuesday's Gone' by Lynyrd Skynyrd."

DEVELOPER: Neversoft **DISTRIBUTOR:** Activision PLAYERS: 1-4





STREET FIGHTER IV

SFIV is worth paying double for. Acquire on sight."

DEVELOPER: Capcom PUBLISHER: THQ PLAYERS: 1-2

NBA 2K9

"Basketball's hardly

the national sport of

doesn't mean that the

Australia, but that

game can't be fun. This is a decent

representation of Barack Obama's

favourite sport. Fans of basketball

"Capcom has been in the virtual brawling business longer than

anyone, and with its vibrant look, online mode and pristine gameplay,

VIRTUA TENNIS 2009

"More of a tweak than a brand new experience,

Virtua Tennis 2009 is still the most enjoyable tennis game available today. Along with player creation tools, the biggest plus is the chance to play in the Davis Cup.'

DEVELOPER: Sumo DISTRIBUTOR: SEGA PLAYERS: 1-4





SINGSTAR

"Take SingStar for what it is: a sublimely developed party game

that cruelly exploits drunken girls and deludes them into believing they are 'SingStars'. Perfectly presented, and endlessly fun post-booze-fest. It's no Rock Band though."

DEVELOPER: Sony
DISTRIBUTOR: Sony PLAYERS: 1-4

TOP 5

SWEET RIDES



BATMOBILE (BATMAN ARKHAM ASYLUM)

All right, so about the closest you get in the actual game is grabbing some stuff from the boot, but that's not the point, If it could be driven, it would be our number one choice.



BUGATTI VEYRON (NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERCOVER)

When we used to think 'Bugatti' we thought of vintage cars. Now we think of a brute that can eclipse 400km/h in a straight line. The cornering sucks, but meh, who cares?



JANSEN 88 SPECIAL (BURNOUT PARADISE)

Our other '80s love w the clean-it-with-steel-wool DeLorean, as drooled over in Back to the Future. Now we can drive/fly it - copyright evasion via renaming be damned!



FERRARI TESTAROSSA (OUTRUN ONLINE)

The love affair started in the '80s, so when we hit the highway we can't go past this hooning to the tunes



KATAMARI (KATAMARI FOREVER)

The perfect Sunday set of 'wheels'. Imagine, just gathering all of those crap drivers up into one massive ball of idiocv as you roll from your desired point A to point B. Special!



THOUSE



stablished at the dawn of the new millennium, Halfbrick has built a solid reputation for coding hand-held games based on major licensed properties. Early Halfbrick titles included GBA ports of *Ty the Tasmanian Tiger 2* and *3*, and more recently an excellent adaptation of *Avatar: The Last Airbender* for Nintendo DS. As production has ramped up across all major hardware platforms, Halfbrick has grown from six to over 35 full-time staff in less than a decade.

Yet it would be a mistake to judge this company based on the laid-back, shoesoptional attitude of its staff – Halfbrick is not resting on its laurels. To diversify the company's software lineup, and to seize greater control over their creative destine, Halfbrick has started developing games for download services such as the PlayStation Network. These games are smaller, faster, and cheaper to develop than blockbuster boxed copies, and they're all based on Halfbrick's own IPs.

We recently had a chance to catch up with Halfbrick producer Sean Druitt, whose team is working on four PSP minis, DLC games designed to work on the new PSP Go. "When Sony announced PSP Minis we immediately recognised the potential for our Halfbrick



INFO

FOUNDED: 2001 LOCATION: KELVIN GROVE, BRISBANE KEY STAFF:



WWW.HALFBRICK.COM

download services such twork. These games are changing discs, and players can actually eaper to develop than "Load times will be minimal, there's no changing discs, and players can actually achieve something worthwhile in a very short

amount of time."

a game within seconds.

Druitt cited Halfbrick Echoes as an example of how such a game can sustain a surreal and artistic atmosphere, yet deliver satisfying gameplay in manageable, bite-sized chunks.

Fridays games on the platform, so we're

currently in the process of coding and polishing

While Mr. Druitt expresses regret that his

chance they'll be out before the end of the year.

He can see PSP minis providing gamers with

an experience closer to what you'd expect on

mobile phones - an already highly successful

standard PSP games, and they are available

via download only on the PlayStation Network.

They are specifically designed to be quick and

intuitive so anyone can easily jump in and out of

"PSP Minis will be smaller and cheaper than

to make sure they play perfectly on the PSP.

titles won't launch with the PSP minis service

on October 1, he reckons there's a good

"The levels themselves will usually never take longer than a minute to play as the primary focus is collecting crystals in the shortest time possible, but even the smallest session will count towards a high score or unlocking new levels and modes. This is true for our other games including Halfbrick Rocket Racing and Zombies, where simple gameplay mechanics will be supported by a consistent artistic quality and the feeling of achievement by always improving your score or time."

Perhaps most important of all, SCE is doing everything in its power to streamline the creation of these games, so that a bustling stable of alternatives will face consumers on day one.

"Sony is supporting developers through the submission process, so the level of polish will be quite high." **4. James Cottee**

HALFBRICK FRIDAYS

Australian-made PSP minis, coming soon to your PSP Go



HALFBRICK BLAST OFF

Part Asteroids, part Defender, part madness! Rescue astronauts by using the gravitational slingshot effect of dozens of planets and moons. Far out!



HALFBRICK ECHOES

A highly artistic riff on Snake. Collect crystals to clear levels, while avoiding contact with the ghosts of your hat. Stranger than it sounds.



HALFBRICK ZOMBIES ARE COMING

Top-down, zombieblasting mayhem. Gun down wave after wave of zombies, while aiming for the highest number of kills each level.



HALFBRICK ROCKET RACING

In the tradition of Super Sprint and Mashed, a stylish top-down racer where the only controls are the triggers. Stark colours, and multi-track drifting!



AUSTRALIAN

TATTOOS. STYLE. CULTURE

ISSUE 2 ON SALE NOW!

FAMOUS



SHADOW OF ROME

Better bring a mop

ike any other product of culture, such as films and books, games follow a pattern of both content and theme. For a few years in early- to mid-2000s, gladiator games were huge, from tactical RPGs like snooze-fest *Gladius*, to action games such as *Gladiator: The Crimson Reign. Shadow of Rome* falls in to this latter category, whilst also being super-trendy and shoehorning in a stealth component as well. We should point out that making a gladiator sneak around is kinda like making a rhinoceros wear ballet shoes and expecting it to pirouette.

The game is split in to two diametrically opposed elements. The aforementioned stealth, in which you play as Octavianus and poke around Rome, and the action section, where you control Agrippa, a former general who takes the role of a gladiator. Both characters are on a quest to find out why Agrippa's father, Marcus Vipsanius, was falsely accused of murdering Julius Caesar. His fate: execution by the winner of the gladiatorial games. Despite the late-nightmovie plot legitimising the stealthy bits, the reason to play Shadow is for Agrippa's battle sections, which are replete with brutal, gory action sequences.

Once Agrippa is on the sand in the arena, combat is reminiscent of SEGA's *The Club* in that while the point is to decimate the other chumps

that come after you, points are racked up through style and fluid techniques. This means utilising the multitude of sharp, pointy weapons strewn around, and also appealing to the base pleasures of the crowd with over the top moves and finishes. Swords, daggers, scimitars, barrels of oil, torches to set fire to the oil, rocks, and your bare fists could be employed to dramatically finish off opponents, but not before carving them like a joint of meat.

Stripping a foe of his limbs meant you could use the detached appendage as a weapon itself, and you could be rewarded for lopping two limbs off at the same time. Get in the right spot and with the right combo and you could literally slice an eight-foot foe in two, making a bright red fountain. Failing this it's also possible to drop him on the ground and go wild with your heel.

Stringing combos together with taunts and chained attacks sets the crowd off, your barometer to success. Keeping rogue body parts for yourself seems a bit selfish so it's encouraged to lob them in to the crowd.

Perhaps what's more surprising than the game being totally playable and also graphically impressive is how it ever got past the OFLC. If you do see this available, make sure you have a PS2 to play it as 60GB PS3s won't. You should have a bloody good time. Paul Taylor



□ INFO

CONSOLE: PS2
GENRE: ADVENTURE
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: JAPAN
CURRENT APPROXIMATE
PRICE: \$40 (EBAY)

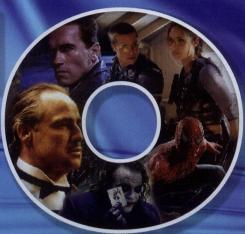


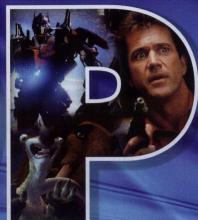
ROMAN AROUND

Capcom produced one of its more gruesome games with Shadow of Rome. It shouldn't have had a problem, really, as Capcom also released Devil May Cry 3, Killer7, Beat Down: Fists of Vengenace and Monster Hunter G in Japan around the same time. Action master Capcom is, it didn't shy away from some tongue-in-cheek though anachronistic special moves. Some of our favourites: Better Late Than Lever (attacking an enemy who is pulling a lever), Shishkebab (finish an enemy with a spear) and Fresh Ham (throw a severed head or arm in to the crowd).

ESSENTIAL READING FOR BLU-RAY COLLECTORS

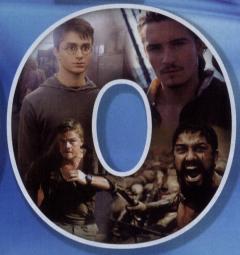












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ner: OPS will do everything within its power to deliver this content next month, but we can't be held at fault if things go awry or scheduled games slip and miss our deadlines!

